

TWO SUPER COLOR STORIES IN THIS SUMMER SPECTACULAR!

VAMPIRELLA

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**SPECIAL
5th
ANNIVERSARY
ISSUE**

**VAMPIRELLA
HER BLOOD-RED
QUEEN
OF HEARTS
BECOMES
AN ANCIENT
EGYPTIAN
RULER
IN
"VAMPIRE
OF THE NILE!"**

**ALSO
"PUPPET
PLAYER!"
MURDEROUS
MANIKINS
PLOT A GHASTLY
REVENGE
AGAINST MAN!**

**SEVEN
CHILLING
CLASSICS!**

♥
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♥
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WELCOME TO THE
WEIRD AND WONDERFUL
WORLD OF **VAMPIRELLA!**

THAT'S **ME**.
VAMPIRESS FROM
BEYOND THE STARS,
WEAVER OF STRANGE,
AND OFTEN CHILLING
TALES...

AND THIS IS MY SPECIAL
FIFTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!
WITHIN THESE PAGES I HAVE
BROUGHT TOGETHER THE WORLD'S
GREATEST WRITERS AND ARTISTS
TO PRESENT SEVEN TALES OF THE
MYSTERIOUS, THE **UNHOLY**, AND THE
DAMNED. TALES OF **FANTASY**.
TALES OF **EVIL**. TALES OF
HORROR. TALES THAT WILL
TEST THE BOUNDARIES OF
YOUR **IMAGINATION**.

MINE IS
A WORLD OF
AWE AND
WONDER. NOW
I INVITE YOU TO
SHARE IT WITH
ME...



Jose Gonzalez



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VAMPIRELLA

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CONCERNING OUR MAIL ORDER ADVERTISEMENTS: Warren Publishing Co. guarantees the delivery and satisfaction of all items advertised in this issue. Should you need to write us concerning an order, whether it be from our address or a Post Office Box address, send your letter to: E.C. Ives, Customer Service Dept., Warren Publishing Co., 145 E. 32nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10016.



Readers welcome the return of Jeff Jones!

Chalk up another success for everybody at Warren, with the May issue of VAMPIRELLA.

The Flaxman Loew/Jose Gonzalez team produced a good story in "The Sultan's Revenge." It was clever, using a character from the previous issue as the antagonist in this one. Loew seems to have mastered the art of the twist ending, and Gonzalez did exceptional illustration, capturing the mood of the Oriental kingdom and the demons lurking in the crypt.

The rest of the issue was also better than usual. Pantha is starting to get more complex as she probes the mystery of her childhood. Rich Corben's art on "Top to Bottom" was perfect for the moody setting, and the Chinese vampire in "Barfly" was a welcome change. Perhaps John Jacobson could be persuaded to do a sequel?

One final note: I am glad to hear that Archie Goodwin is back. It's been too long an absence without his skills. Now if he can only find the time to write a few scripts...

NORMAN E. DAVISON
Union, N.J.

I have enjoyed reading your magazine for two years now, and every issue is more fantastic than the last! All of the artists in Warren magazines are great!

The last few covers have been excellent, especially the ones with VAMPIRELLA on the cover! But with all that excellence, there are still flaws.

For one thing, you need more series every issue, and more Gothic stories like "Quavering Shadows."

You should also bring back VAMPI's FLAMES, and possibly some pin-up pages of VAMPI in various costumes. How about more posters inside the magazine and not always on the back cover!

Also, now that you have Archie Goodwin back, how about letting him script some VAMPIRELLA stories?

Please consider some of the improvements and a great magazine may become even better!

STEVE JACOBS
Modest Town, Va.

What happened to your legs in the Scarlet Letters logo? You seem to be all shrivelled up! Are you in a state of transformation or is something in there with you?

WILLIAM NEWBY
San Diego, Cal.

I'll never tell.

I really enjoy your magazine. Your art is excellent and the stories show careful thought is involved in the writing. Jose Gonzalez, unlike other artists breathes life into his drawings. And Flaxman Loew shows a subtlety of plot not often found in horror magazines!

NOLA FRAME
Granada Hills, Calif.

The coming out of VAMPIRELLA from a tongue-in-cheek hostess to the star of her own series in 1971 was one of the big events in graphic literature in the last ten years. Even after Archie Goodwin retired from the series, VAMPIRELLA still inspired its writers to rise to the challenge, producing intriguing, powerful stories.

Until Flaxman Loew. It seems he has reduced the star of the series to a bit part, her only contribution to the story in #34 being to kill Sull. As for the rest of the stories in that issue, they were so devoid of depth and purpose that it is impossible to even comment on them.

Maybe I'm being unreasonable to expect VAMPIRELLA to metamorphose overnight, but so far the only change I've noticed is the name Archie Goodwin in the credits.

LYNN SCHARBOW
San Francisco, Calif.

I see that we have another controversy brewing in the letters pages. Four different readers in VAMPIRELLA #33 voice the complaint that our heroine has become a bit generous with her affections!

This hasn't bothered me much. She is, after all, currently unattached. And it seems unreasonable that a woman as attractive as VAMPI should be lacking male companionship for very long. Certainly the few involvements she has had do not make her promiscuous. In fact, this seems to compliment your magazine's mature attitude.

The subject of VAMPI's love life has always been handled with intelligence and good taste, avoiding excessive amounts of either romanticism or eroticism. Still a variety of lovers seems to trouble many readers. So Adam Van Helsing will eventually demand a return as VAMPI's steady boy friend. But even their past relationship was interrupted by a brief fling with Dracula. So we can only anticipate more of the same.

Anyway, Adam or no Adam, I can hardly wait to see VAMPI in color again.

BRIAN CADEN
Cincinnati, Ohio

Your issues are getting better and better, and issue #34 was great! Jeff Jones' work on the inside front cover was superb, and I'm glad to see Felix Mas has returned! One thing though. You said that Frank Frazetta was back, but all I have seen by him was one cover which also appeared on a paperback! When do we see some new stuff?

HUDSON HILL
Cape Canaveral, Fla.

Frank is about as hard to pin down as yours truly, Hudson.

The highlight of VAMPIRELLA #34 was the color story, "Black and White Vacuum to Blues." Doug Moench, Esteban Maroto, and Bill DuBay really outdid themselves in an intelligent, thought provoking story that did not rely on monsters or gore.

JAMES REASONER
Azle, Texas

VAMPIRELLA #34 was excellent. From "Carnival of Death" to the moodily illustrated tale, "Cold Cuts," it was just great but there are two things I'd like to comment on.

First was Archie Goodwin's sensible editorial on black and white comics.

The main trouble is that too many horror films have been done in color. Of course, there is nothing wrong with that. Hammer and American-International have done it quite successfully. But black and white is perhaps the only way to do truly moody horror stories. I have heard it oft said that Hitchcock's PSYCHO was never meant for color and I concur. The shower scene would have been totally ruined in color. Mario Bava's BLACK SUNDAY with lovely Barbara Steele (now there would be a beautiful movie VAMPIRELLA!) is another classic black & white fright film. And let's not forget NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD.

Black & white can sometimes be more effective in conveying an atmosphere of horror than vivid color!

Secondly, the little item on page four leads me to believe that you are going to pit VAMPI against a female foe. It's about time! You could even use one of your already existing characters such as Pantha or Luana!

Also, I hope you have plans to bring back Ch'ing Shih, the Chinese vampire in John Jacobson's "Barfly."

RAYMOND BOWIE
Somerville, Mass.



"The Carnival of Death," the chilling tale of the night the graves surrendered their dead brought accolades to writer FLAXMAN LOEW and artist GONZALEZ!

"Fleur may rival VAMPI!"

I want to thank you for putting out all the **Warren** magazines. Each one is a great achievement in adult graphics and storytelling. But I have a question concerning **VAMPIRELLA**.

Why does she wear the same costume issue after issue? Our girl looked ravishing in #31, with a gown and a different hair style. Please have more of this!

JOHN CRANE
Willingboro, N.J.

Flaxman Loew's VAMPIRELLA stories have a dull similarity to each other, except for different scenery and supporting characters. I hardly have to read beyond the first page because I already know what will happen! In addition, he overuses words like **cosmic passion** and **delicious**. **VAMPI** herself is often superfluous, contributing only bits of dialogue and some blood-draining.

However, I liked his story in #33, especially the ending. I would like to see **Flaxman Loew** use his talents on non-**VAMPIRELLA** stories, for he can write a good story, but still can't handle **VAMPIRELLA** and **Pendragon's** characters the way they should be.

ANN NICHOLS
Williamsport, Md.

Just picked up **VAMPI** #34 and I have a couple of things to point out.

The cover: clever and well done, though it could have been more detailed. The full length of our lovely **VAMPIRELLA** was great, except that the face had lost some of the cool mystique that makes **VAMPI** so sensuous. But look at the fear in the other! True talent! Not really **Enrich** at his best, but **Enrich** nonetheless.

I was skeptical as to whether I should even open to the letters page this issue. Once again the main talk was of a full length saga for **VAMPIRELLA**. It seems that once a topic is brought up, it stays around for months afterward.

I realize that a longer story would be a strain on artist **Jose Gonzalez** and the writer, but if it were held back one or two months it might be worth it.

How about seeing **Dracula** again? He's long since left the pages of **EERIE** and would be welcomed with open arms by most.

DANNY SCOTRAS
Orano, Maine

At least one of your wishes will be granted, Danny. A new **Dracula** series will be coming your way soon.

I just bought **VAMPI** #33 and the art is getting better and better! The color story was great and **Rich Corben** made the best possible use of it!

EDWARD REICHENBACH
Paris, France

I have just finished reading **VAMPIRELLA** #33. I would like to see **Pantha** dropped, and the **VAMPI** stories made longer. **Auraleon's** art is good, but the stories are only fair.

"Sultana's Revenge" was excellent. What better punishment could be suffered by someone like the Sultana than to become so obese. I am glad to see that **VAMPIRELLA** is not being treated as just another she-vampire, but as a unique and human creature.

KURT KALISH
Thousand Oaks, Calif.

Your covers are the most appealing on the stands because of talented men like **Sanjulian** and **Enrich**.

Warren magazines never cease to fill me with awe at the sheer brilliance they unfold with each passing issue.

With **VAMPIRELLA** #30, you've had a steady roll call of stellar talents: **Rich Corben**, **Frank Frazetta**, **Jeff Jones**.

Warren gives us dazzling color, nice pastel overlaid letters pages, informative articles, excellent editorials. The covers are top notch and the art and stories are usually just as good! What more could anyone ask?

ANTHONY DALEY
Chicago, Ill.

Issue #34 was great, virtually exploding with brilliant story and art.

In particular, I enjoyed "The Black and White Vacuum Blues" story by **Doug Muench** and **Esteban Maroto**. The story was relevant and presented with depth and insight. A clown could not have been a better choice for a lead character. **Bill DuBay's** color also added a great deal to the story.

"Miranda" was equally nice, and the story particularly touching... and it seems like you've got a winner on your hands with **Fleur**!

How about bringing back some of the artists who helped make **VAMPIRELLA** great in the past? People such as **Billy Graham** and **Neal Adams** would be a welcome sight in your pages once again, and possibly some newcomers like **Jim Starlin**!

Anyway, keep up the good work!

L. DIETRICH ADONIS
St. Croix



Readers hail **Fleur** as the most exciting new creation since **VAMPIRELLA**! **John Jacobson** and **Ramon Torrents** are already putting their awesome talents to more exciting episodes of this wonderful, whimsical witch!

Being an aspiring artist and a lover of comic art, I always look to **Warren** for originality, creativity, and sheer beauty. However, I am inclined to agree with **Gary Kimber's** letter in **VAMPI** saying that the early issues of **CREEPY** and **EERIE** are your most outstanding.

I find the work of three of your present artists to be totally inspiring. **Frank Frazetta**, **Fernando Fernandez**, and **Rich Corben**. I for one feel that **Corben's** fantastically bizarre style is deserving of better stories than you have been giving him... stories that better put to use his bizarre style.

DICK BOND
Dayton, Ohio

"From the Spain of Legend" in **VAMPIRELLA** #34 was outstanding! The story and art were both well executed, and the ending had twists that made it fresh, unpredictable, and worthwhile. **Fleur** is already a rival for **VAMPIRELLA**.

But what happened to **Pantha**? I'd still like to know how she manages to keep her pants on when all else fails! The "cat" certainly doesn't wear them, so why be puritanical when she reverts back to her human self?

RICK MEIBER
Maynard, Mass.

Pantha isn't gone, Rick. She'll be alternating with **Fleur** for a backup spot in my magazine.

SUMMER'S HERE! GET INTO THE SWIM OF THINGS!

And you wouldn't want to see our harried heroine be lonely, would you? You can start by sending her some mail to help her keep her cool! Don't let **VAMPI's** mailbox suffer a dry spell! Send your comments and suggestions right away, to:
SCARLET LETTERS
c/o Warren Publishing Co.
145 East 32nd Street
New York, NY 10016



VAMPIR'S VAULT

THE STORY AND SOUL OF FERNANDO FERNANDEZ THE MAN WHO IS WHAT HE DRAWS



I was asked for the story of my life, that Warren Publishing might run a brief biography," wrote Fernando Fernandez, one of our most illustrative artists, "and I wrote it. But," he continued, "after reading it several times, I realized that this just wasn't my life."

We read the information with interest, but were convinced by Fernando not to run it.

"Any artist's or illustrator's life," he believes, "is just that: his art! The facts, dates, and numbers tell you nothing about the man!" And so, based on this idea, we allowed one of our finest artists free reign to discuss his career.

"Whether the art is 'fine' or whether it is commercial," he began, "is of little importance to the true creator. What he does care about is his work itself, and how it is a reflection of his inner self."

"A man's art is where he feels... where he breathes. He is driven on, always wanting to improve, to go on seeking the self which he does not understand."

"He keeps looking for this identity, which is as vital a part of himself as food and water."

"And this, quite honestly, is not only my story, but that of anyone who has ever sought to create art in any form."

His point is a valid one, which suggests that it is not really important when or where an artist was born, or where he went to school. For art, as nature, eggs us on, beyond our control. One can only suspect that this is the way it was meant to be. Without this drive, we would all be content to do second-best.

And, we think, Fernando's dedication is reflected in his exceptional work!



Nowhere has Fernando's idea of art as a mirror of life been more evident than in the sensitive renderings of "Rendezvous," *Vampirella* #35.

WARREN'S BEST WRITERS AND ARTISTS TEAM TO GIVE YOU A SPECIAL TREAT! ON VAMPIR'S FIFTH ANNIVERSARY!

Welcome to the Fifth Anniversary issue of *VAMPIRELLA*. As you will see in the pages that follow, we've tried our best to make the contents of this issue appropriate to the special occasion. For example, we feature this month two full-color sections, showcasing the masters of illustrated fantasy. There is **Fernando Fernandez'** disturbing vision of the future, where children have indeed inherited the earth... and **Jose Bea's** equally unnerving tale about monstrous marionettes.

In addition, we again honor many readers' requests to feature a new artist on *VAMPIRELLA*. Flaxman Loew and Jose Ortiz recount one of the most startling surprises in the continuing adventures of our blood-queen. Plus... four more exciting tales of chilling horror and haunting mystery!

We think it is only fitting that our readers share in this anniversary celebration, since it is they who have made *VAMPIRELLA* one of the most successful creations in comicdom! And with five years behind us, we are still only beginning...

In the forthcoming months, there will be more surprises, more amazing adventures with *Vampi*, the mysterious *Fleur*, and the feline huntress *Pantha*... plus the long-awaited return of *Count Dracula* to these pages!

Next issue: a special retrospective of *VAMPIRELLA's* finest! But first... enjoy the thrills of this unique Fifth Anniversary issue!

THE CREATIVE MAN DUBE: INSIDE A BIG CITY EDITOR

Commercial art stinks... or so they say. 'They' being the purists, those creators who paint and draw for their own satisfaction alone. But artists must eat, and this habit dictates that one must sell his talents to those who will buy. This situation, quite obviously, does not permit a creative individual his fullest and most rewarding means of expression. He must please the masses first and his own sense of aesthetics second. And, to an extent, this situation applies to the creative people behind the Warren Magazines. In this column, we will chip away the veneer of commercialism and find out what sort of work our people most like to do. What are their projects and dreams... ideas and ideals. In the future, we'll feature **Leo Summers**, **Esteban Maroto**, **Paul Neary**, and others; for this initial installment, it seemed only proper to begin with our own resident Creator.



To his intimates, **William Bryan DuBay** is called nothing more imposing than 'Dube.' He can write and he can draw. You've seen his work within these pages.

Ideally, the Warren editor of 3 years standing would like nothing better than to have a cottage in Maine, raise enough food to sate his family's appetite, and spend the rest of the time drawing a comic strip of his own invention.

Dube's comic strip work is much unlike his Warren art. And it's all the more touching in that Dube resembles the caricatures he creates.

So, for the masochistic, here is a sample of work that may some day soon grace your daily newspaper... The type of work Dube likes to do!



VAMPIRELLA

AS THE SAGA OF THE DELICIOUS DRAKULONNE CONTINUES TO UNFOLD, CERTAIN MYSTERIES BECOME MORE CLEAR, OTHERS REMAIN...

WHY, WE ASK, IS THE ADORABLE VAMPIRELLA STUCK WITH PENDRAGON, THAT VERBOSE ALCOHOLIC WHOSE END IS ONLY TOO PREDICTABLE?

THAT IS A MINOR MYSTERY, AND IT WILL BE RESOLVED WITHIN THESE PAGES. A LARGER QUESTION REMAINS. WHAT LIES BEHIND VAMPIRELLA'S FORMER EXISTENCE ON THE VAMPIRE PLANET DRAKULON... AND WHY, WHEN DRAKULON DIED, WAS SHE DRAWN TO EARTH?

TO FIND THE ANSWER, WE FOLLOW THE HEROINE FROM DRAKULON TO THE ANCIENT CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION THAT LIES ATWART THE RIVER NILE... TO EGYPT.

TO MEET...

"The VAMPIRE OF THE NILE"

I WILL
MAKE YOU
LIKE
MYSELF...
A
VAMPIRE!



THE LANGUOROUS DELIGHTS OF MODERN-DAY ALEXANDRIA HAVE FALLEN A LITTLE FLAT WITH VAMPIRELLA AND PENDRAGON...



LATER, PENDY...WHO HAS PERHAPS IMBIBED TOO DEEPLY OF WHAT HE CHOOSES TO DESCRIBE AS THE DISTILLED ESSENCE OF CEREAL GRAINS ...DRIVES THEM TO THE AIRPORT AND HOME...



THEY EXPERIENCE A WRENCHING APART OF MATTER AND SPIRIT...AND RISE TOGETHER IN THE ASTRAL AIR...

THEY ARE UNDER THE SAME SKY, THE SAME SEA OF IRIDESCENT BLUE LIES
UNDER THE TALL TOWERS OF THE ANCIENT CITY... BUT ALL IS CHANGED!

THIS IS NOT THE EGYPT OF ANTIQUITIES... OF RUINS AND DUSTY
MUSEUMS... **ALL IS NEW...**



I HAVEN'T SEEN PTOLEMY SINCE WE WERE CHILDREN TOGETHER...IN ACCORDANCE WITH ROYAL CUSTOM, WE WERE MARRIED BY PROXY... BUT HE WAS A LOATHSOME LITTLE BOY!

THEY GO OUT INTO THE BLINDING SUNLIGHT OF THE EGYPTIAN DAY.

AND HE LIVES OUT HIS DAYS IN THAT HIDEOUS TEMPLE HE HAD BUILT OVER THERE... WHERE I MUST VISIT HIM TONIGHT!

MY QUEEN, IF THE GOSSIP OF THE SLAVE MARKET'S ANYTHING TO GO BY, HE'S GROWN INTO A LOATHSOME LITTLE MAN!

WHAT DOES PTOLEMY DO IN THAT HATEFUL PLACE? WHAT HORRORS AWAIT ME THERE, TONIGHT?

MY QUEEN, HE CLAIMS THAT THE TEMPLE'S DEDICATED TO AMUN-RA! BUT, I'M PRETTY SURE, IF THE NOBLE SUN-GOD KNEW HALF OF WHAT HAPPENED IN THERE, HE'D BLAST THE WHOLE LAND OF EGYPT INTO THE NILE!

PTOLEMY'S ROCK-HEWN TEMPLE FACES THEM ACROSS THE SHIMMERING EXPANSE OF HOT SAND...

I MUST GO THERE ALONE... AND FACE WHATEVER HIDEOUS FATE AWAILS ME!



THE DUSKY WINGS OF NIGHT ARE WRAPPED ABOUT THE LAND OF THE PHARAOHS. THE ROYAL QUEEN, WHO, IN A LATER REINCARNATION IS TO BECOME VAMPIRELLA, APPROACHES THE DREAD TEMPLE OF HER BROTHER-HUSBAND, PTOLEMY!



PRIESTS OF AN UNHALLOWED CULT GREET HER, IMPRISON HER SLENDER WRISTS WITH FETTERS OF BEATEN GOLD...



IN SILENCE, SHE IS BORNE INTO A ROCK-HEWN SEPULCHRE AND SHACKLED TO A LOFTY COLUMN.



WHAT...WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO ME?

THIS NIGHT, O QUEEN, YOU WILL TRULY BECOME THE BRIDE OF YOUR LORD AND MASTER, THE VAMPIRE-KING OF THE NILE!

AS SHE WATCHES ALONE, THE VAMPIRE-KING RISES FROM HIS TOMB!



POSTERITY WILL BOTH LAUD AND DEFILE MY NAME AS THAT OF THE TRUE BEGETTER OF VAMPIRISM! THIS IS MY DARK RELIGION, O MY QUEEN! THIS IS THE CULT THAT SHALL CAST DOWN EVEN AMUN-RA HIMSELF! NOW I WILL GORGE MYSELF ON YOUR BLOOD...

...AND YOU WILL BECOME LIKE ME! A VAMPIRE!

N-NO!



IT IS FROM THIS TIME THAT THE LEGEND OF CLEOPATRA, BEWITCHING SERPENT OF OLD NILE TRULY BEGINS! GONE THE INGENUOUS GIRL. IN HER PLACE, THE TIMELESS ENCHANTRESS WHOM AGE CANNOT WITHER, NOR CUSTOM STALE...



MEN, SHE TAKES AND CASTS ASIDE AT WILL... THE EARTH-SHAKING AFFAIR WITH JULIUS CAESAR IS WORTHY OF A PASSING REFERENCE...



THE BEGINNING OF THE END COMES WITH THE ARRIVAL OF THE TRIREMES OF MARK ANTONY, AS SHE GREET'S HIM IN HER BURNISHED BARGE. ONE LOOK, AND ANTONY IS HER SLAVE FOR ETERNITY.



RANKING AS THE TOP LOVE AFFAIR OF ALL TIME, IT WAS A TRAGICALLY SHORT-LIVED ENCOUNTER, BUT ETERNITY WAS IN THEIR LIPS AND EYES, AND BLISS ON THEIR BROWS.



TEMPTATION IS NEVER FAR FROM THE BLOOD-LUSTING MIND OF THE BEAUTIFUL VAMPIRESS...

WHILE HE SLEEPS, I'LL GORGE MYSELF... NOT ENOUGH TO MATTER...



YOU ARE RESTLESS, MY LOVE...

NOT RESTLESS...



...THIRSTY!

ANTONY LAVISHES GIFTS UPON HER... KINGDOMS AND PROVINCES! BUT IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS THAT MEAN A LOT TO A WOMAN...

HE'S BEEN TRAINED TO TEAR THE THROAT OUT OF ANY SLAVE WHO SHOWS THE LEAST SIGNS OF MISBEHAVING!



HE'S A DARLING!.. I SHALL CALL HIM ANUBIS!



YOU AND I UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER, MY ANUBIS!



THE ELEMENTS OF TRAGEDY ARE ALREADY GATHERED TOGETHER!
IT NEEDS ONLY THE SPARK TO IGNITE THEM. IT HAPPENS
DURING A FEAST...

OOOPS!
SORRY, O MY
QUEEN!

CLUMSY
OFFAL!

ANUBIS!



KILL MY
PET!

NO!

THE CURVED INCISORS
ARE ALREADY
QUESTING FOR THE
SOFTNESS OF THE
SLAVE'S THROAT... BUT
EGYPT'S QUEEN
HAS SPRUNG
FORWARD...



AAAHHH...



MARK ANTONY'S TIME-
LESS LOVE TURNS TO
HORROR AND
REVULSION!

ANTONY!...
I... I CAN
EXPLAIN...

YOU ARE
AN OBSCENITY
OF EVIL!
YOU ARE
DEATH IN ITS
MOST
HIDEOUS
FORM!





**FORGIVE!
I CAN'T
HELP IT!
THIS
CRAVING...**

**FORGIVE?
DOES ONE
FORGIVE A
LOATHSOME
SERPENT?**

**MARK ANTONY THROWS HIMSELF UPON HIS
SWORD IN THE TIME-HONORED
ROMAN FASHION!**



**I AM
DYING,
EGYPT ...
DYING!**

**FOR ONCE,
VAMPIRISH LUST IS
QUENCHED AND TRANS-
SCENDED BY THE PURER
PASSION OF GRIEF.
SHE PILLOWS THE
CORPSE TO HER, HEED-
LESS OF THE HEADY
SCENT OF THE
FRESHLY-SHED
BLOOD...**



**GONE... AND ALL
THAT'S LEFT
ME IS...
VENGEANCE!**

**ACCOMPANIED BY HER FAVORITE SLAVE,
SHE GOES TO THE DREAD TEMPLE WHERE
HER YOUTHFUL INNOCENCE HAD BEEN
TORN AND RENT FROM HER ...**



**PTOLEMY!
I'M
COMING
FOR YOU!**



**WHY DO WE
BRING A WOODEN
STAKE AND
A HAMMER,
O MY
QUEEN?**

**WAIT
AND
SEE!**



THEY GAZE DOWN UPON THE SLEEPING COUNTENANCE OF THE VAMPIRE-KING OF EGYPT.

YOUNG PTOLEMY? BUT, MY QUEEN, HE LOOKS AS OLD AS TIME!

HE HAS TAKEN UPON HIMSELF AN ETERNITY OF EVIL!



IT IS HER HAND THAT DRIVES HOME THE POINTED SHAFT!



AAAAACCHHHCHH



THEN THERE IS A BURST OF ASTRAL LIGHT!

A VOICE OF THUNDER ECHOES THROUGH THE VAULTED SEPULCHRE

THE QUEEN OF KINGS AND HER SLAVE PROSTRATE THEMSELVES...

SO PERISH ALL WHO TURN THEIR FACES FROM THE SUN AND GAZE UPON THE PLACES OF DARKNESS!



AMUN-RA!



THE RAM-HEADED SUN-GOD OF EGYPT RAISES UP THE VAMPIRE-QUEEN...

YOU, CHILD OF THE EARTH, HAVE FOUND FAVOR BY DESTROYING HE WHO DEFIED THE WAYS OF LIGHT. AMUN-RA WILL REWARD YOU.



AMUN-RA CAN-
NOT REMOVE
THE EVIL THAT
HAS ENTERED
YOU, BUT HE CAN
GRANT YOU A
**HUMAN
DEATH!**

AFTER YOU
HAVE PASSED
BEYOND, YOU
WILL BE
REINCARNATED
IN A WORLD BEYOND
THE STARS, WHERE
THE EVIL WITHIN YOU
WILL BE TRANSMUTED
INTO **GOOD...**
YOU WILL BE HAPPY
THERE, WHERE THE
SWEET RIVERS OF
BLOOD FLOOD THROUGH
VALLEYS OF DEEP
CONTENTMENT, AND
THE **BLOOD-DRINKERS**
KNOW NO PAIN, NO
GUILT, NO DESPAIR...
THIS PLACE
IS CALLED...
DRAKULON!

**CLEOPATRA SAYS GOODBYE TO HER
FAVORITE SLAVE**

NO TEARS FOR
ME, MY FRIEND.
I'M GOING
TO A BETTER
PLACE. DID YOU
GET... IT?

IT'S IN THE
BASKET,
O MY
QUEEN...



WHEN I GET TO THE
OTHER PLACE...TO
DRAKULON... I
THINK I SHALL TAKE
THE NAME OF...
VAMPIRELLA!

YOU KNOW
WHAT? I HAVE
IMMORTAL
LONGINGS
IN ME!



I
MUST
REMEMBER
HER DYING
WORDS! SUCH
LOVELY
SENTIMENTS
SHOULDN'T BE
LOST TO
POSTERITY!
POSTERITY
COULD **USE**
SENTIMENTS
LIKE
THESE!



THE SPIRIT OF SHE WHO HAD BEEN CLEOPATRA, DAUGHTER OF THE PTOLEMIES, DESCENDANT OF ALEXANDER, BELOVED OF AMLIN-RA, QUEEN OF KINGS, RISES FROM HER EARTHLY BODY AND DRIFTS ACROSS THE VOID OF BLACKNESS, ACROSS THE TRACKLESS WASTES OF SPACE AND TIME TO A NEW LIFE ON A DISTANT WORLD...



TIME IS MEANINGLESS. NOW IS THE INSTANT IN WHICH SHE LIVES. NOW SHE IS VAMPIRELLA, THE GIRL WHO CAME FROM DRAKULON... THE MISTS CLEAR. SHE HAS THE TANG OF ETHER IN HER NOSTRILS. SHE OPENS HER EYES...



NO!
IT CAN'T
BE...
ANTONY!



ANTONIONI!
DOCTOR
ANTONIONI...

...FROM
ROME!

YOU WERE IN A
TERRIBLE ACCIDENT.
YOU CAR
DEMOLISHED.

FORTUNATELY, NO
ONE WAS SERIOUSLY
HURT... YOU'VE BEEN
UNCONSCIOUS... AND,
I SUSPECT, **DREAMING!**

BUT YOUR
ALRIGHT. YOU'VE A
FRIEND WAITING
FOR YOU OUTSIDE!



YOU WENT...
WHERE?
EGYPT?

WE WERE
THERE TOGETHER... ALL THOSE
CENTURIES
AGO,
PENDY!

THERE HAD TO BE A BOND
BETWEEN US! I KNEW IT!
THERE HAD TO BE SOME REASON
WHY FATE BROUGHT US TOGETHER...
AND HAS KEPT US SO
CLOSE ALL THESE
YEARS!

VAMPI, MY DEAR...
IT LOOKS AS
THOUGH WE WERE
FATED TO STAY
INSEPERABLE!



PROLOGUE

AFTER THAT WONDERFUL MORNING, **NO ONE** HAD TO EAT STICKY, LUMPY CEREAL BECAUSE IT WAS "**GOOD**" FOR THEM.

AFTER THAT WONDERFUL MORNING, NO ONE HAD TO **COMB** THEIR HAIR, OR **BRUSH** THEIR TEETH, OR BE SURE THEY **WASHED** BEHIND THEIR EARS

AFTER THAT WONDERFUL MORNING, THE WORLD WAS **CHANGING** FOR THEM. NOW IT WAS AN ENDLESS **VACATION**. NO MORE SCHOOL, NO MORE BORING HOMEWORK

NOW EVE HAD LOTS OF TIME FOR FEEDING DOLLY. MORNING, AFTERNOON OR EVENING ANYTIME OR ALWAYS. BUT IF DOLLY DIDN'T **FEEL** LIKE EATING.

... SHE WOULD **NEVER** BE PUNISHED THE WAY **THEY** HAD PUNISHED **HER**. NO. NEVER, NEVER. DOLLY WAS GOING TO BE JUST AS HAPPY AS **EVE** WAS...

... AND **TONY**, WHO NO LONGER HAD TO SUFFER HIS PARENTS' EVER-CONSTANT FIGHTING...

... AND **MAGGIE**, WHO GOT TO THROW AWAY THOSE AWFUL BRACES THE DENTIST MADE HER WEAR.

YES, IT REALLY WAS A WONDERFUL MORNING.

NOW **CRICKETS** COULD BE HEARD WHERE BEFORE THERE WAS ONLY THE ANGRY DIN OF **TRAFFIC**. NOW **BUTTERFLIES**, LONG DRIVEN BY DEADLY **EXHAUST FUMES** RETURNED TO FLUTTER ABOVE NEW FLOWERS AND GREENERY.



NOW BIRDS WHEELED IN A **CLEAR SKY**.



UNTAINED BY THE DARK SMEAR OF INDUSTRIAL SMOKE...



...VOID OF THE CHOKING SMELL, THE BITTER STING OF POLLUTION...



...FREE EVEN OF THE GRIM SHADOW OF POSSIBLE NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST.



FOR **THESE** AND A HUNDRED OTHER REASONS, THIS, LIKE **ALL** MORNINGS NOW, WAS...

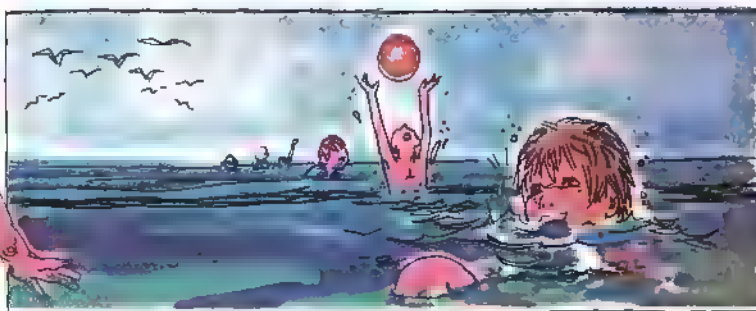
A WONDERFUL MORNING!

STORY AND ART: FERNANDO FERNANDEZ / COLOR: RICH CORBEN

THE RIVERS AND STREAMS RAN
CLEAN, BUBBLED BRIGHTLY.
WITHOUT THE GREASE, THE SILT,
THE WASTE, **FISH** CAME AGAIN.



THE SEA ONCE MORE WAS TO **PLAY** IN, TO FROLIC
HAPPILY. OIL SLICKS DID NOT DARKEN THE WAVES.
GARBAGE DID NOT COVER THE SPARKLING BEACHES.

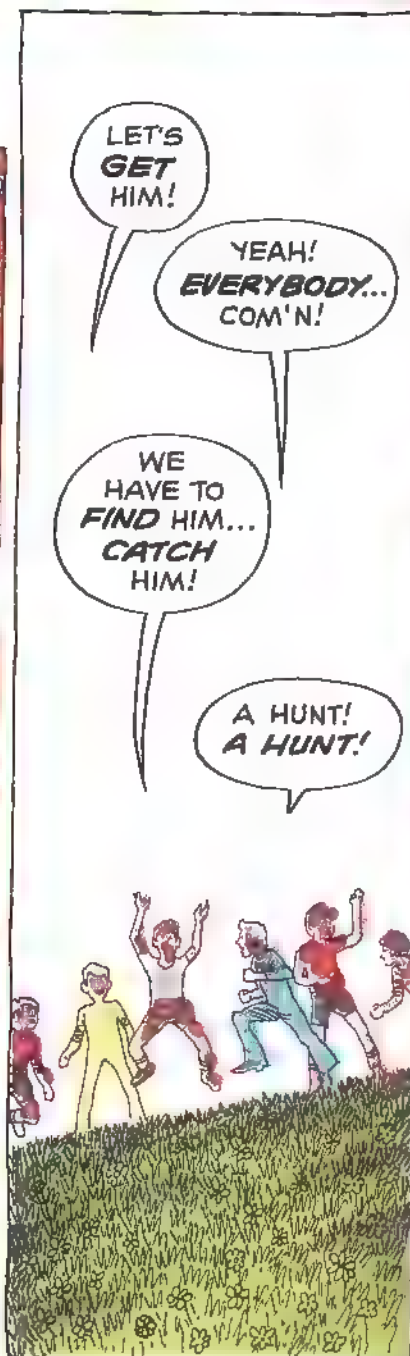
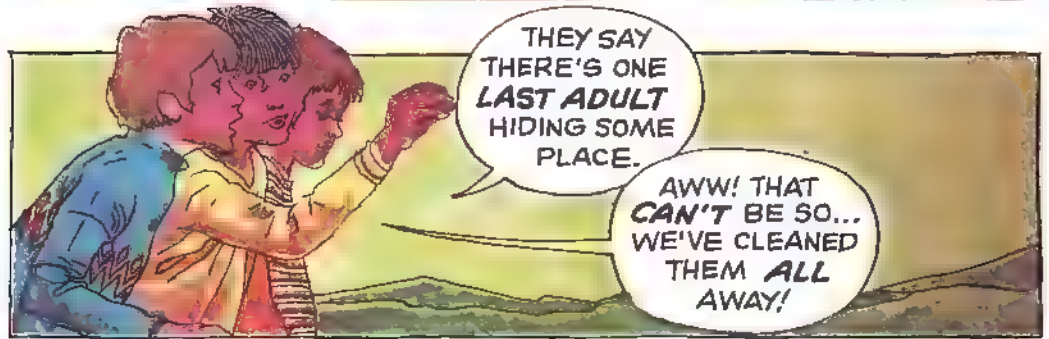


WHAT A
WONDERFUL
MORNING...



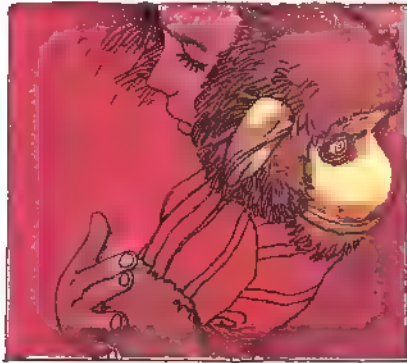
...WITHOUT
THEM.





NOW, EVERYBODY **RAN**.
RAN THROUGH THIS
WONDERFUL MORNING.

SO MANY YEARS OF **HOPE**
HAD PASSED UNFULFILLED,
BUT NOW, THEY WERE FIN-
ALLY GETTING IT... A NEW
HUMANITY, FULL OF LOVE.



WITHOUT HATE...
WITHOUT GRUDGES...

WITHOUT
AMBITION...
WITHOUT
WAR...



WITHOUT SEX...



WITHOUT **VIOLENCE**...

FASTER,
FASTER! WE'RE
CLOSING IN!

HE'S
TIRING!
JUST A
LITTLE
MORE...

THEN
WE'LL
HAVE
HIM!



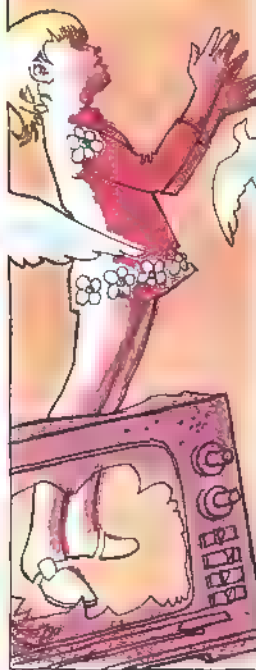
THE
CYCLOPEAN
EYE IN ITS
FORMICA CASE
ASSASSIN OF
CHILDHOOD
IMAGINATION...



... LAY MUTE
AND **BLIND**.
IT WAS NOT
NECESSARY TO
SPEND HOURS
AND HOURS IN
FRONT OF IT...



... AVOIDING
REALITY...

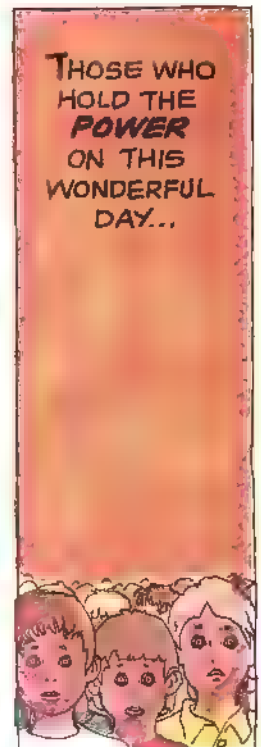
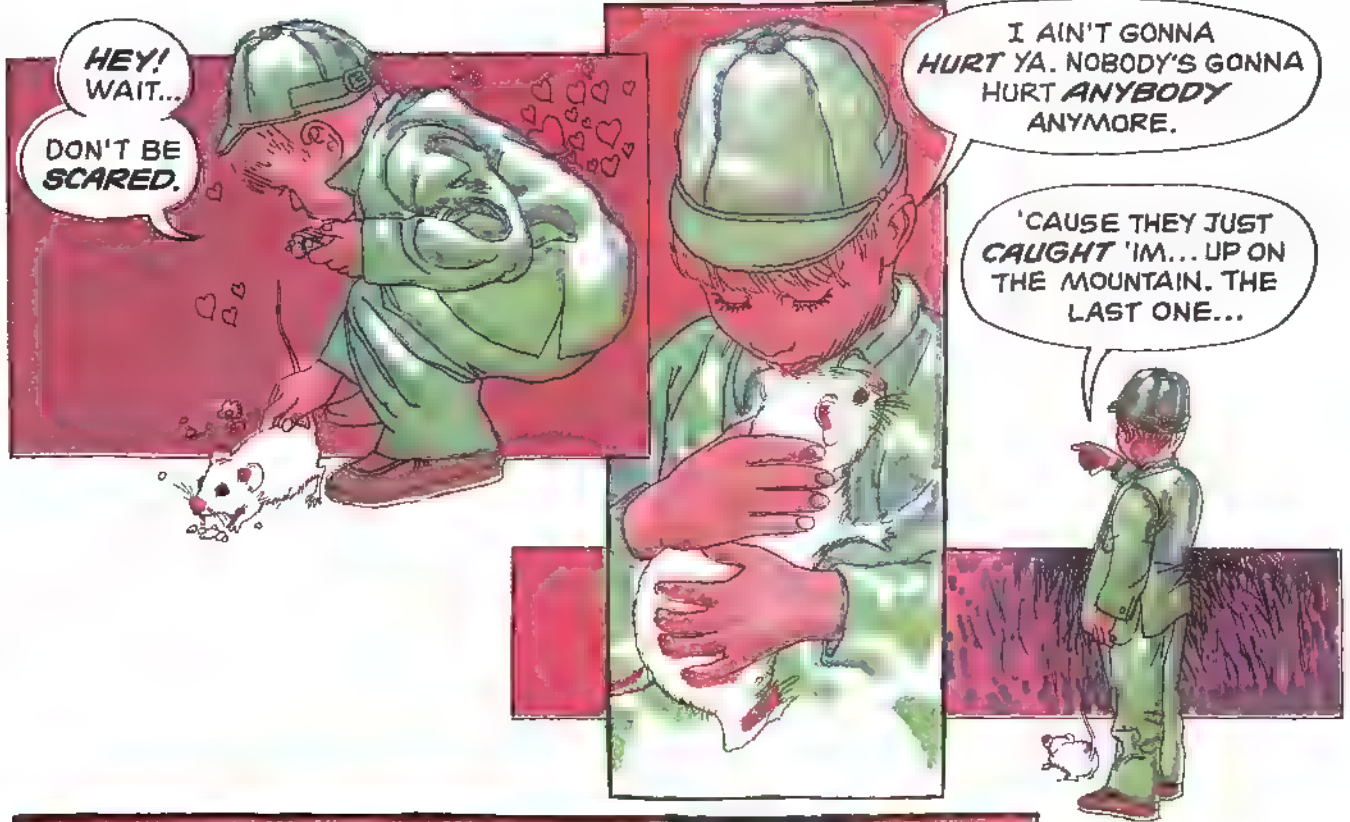


... BECAUSE
REALITY WAS
WONDERFUL!

EXCEPT...

... THERE
WAS STILL
THE **LAST**
ONE.





GIMME
A **BREAK**,
KIDS..!

Y-YOU
DON'T KNOW
WHAT YOU'RE
DOIN'..!

I WAS
A KID ONCE
MYSELF..!

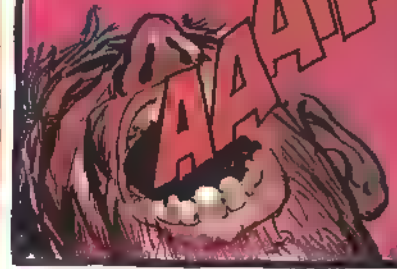


PLEASE!
DON'CHA
UNDER-
STAND..? I
CAN'T **HELP**
IT..!

YOU'RE
ALL GONNA
GROW UP
SOMEDAY,
TOO!



F'R GOD'S
SAKE...LISTEN!
YA GOTTA LISTEN...!
PLEA--



HE **SCREAMED** LIKE ALL THE
OTHERS. HE WOULD **DIE**, EYES
STARING IN **DISBELIEF** LIKE
ALL THE OTHERS. AS ALWAYS,
THE GROWN-UPS JUST DIDN'T
UNDERSTAND...

THIS WAS
NECESSARY!



THERE WAS NO
ALTERNATIVE

CHILDREN **HAD**
TO DO IT TO SAVE
THE WORLD...
THEIR WORLD.

THE LAST ECHO OF
THE LAST ADULT
ON **EARTH** FADED
INTO NOTHINGNESS.

THERE WERE NO
MORE GROWN-UPS,

AFTER
THIS DAY,
THE WORLD
WOULD KNOW
ONLY THE
SOUND OF
CHILDREN
LAUGHING...

AND THEY
WOULD
NEVER
PERMIT THE
ADULTS TO
COME
AGAIN...

NEVER
NEVER
NEVER
NEVER
NEVER

THE TIARA OF DAGON!

ARKHAM
MUSEUM

THE POLICE OF ARKHAM, MASSACHUSETTS STILL TALK ABOUT THAT DAY IN 1931. A DAY THAT BEGAN WITH A VISITOR TO THE LOCAL MUSEUM...A VISITOR THE CURATOR FOUND ALL TOO FAMILIAR...

WE MEET AGAIN, SIMON PEPPER, WITH HOPES HIGH THIS TIME FOR MUTUAL AGREEMENT ON ALL ASPECTS OF OUR DISPUTE.

THE ONLY SATISFACTORY AGREEMENT I WANT IS THE CONCLUSION OF YOUR BOTHERSOME VISITS. THE OBJECT YOU DESIRE IS SIMPLY NOT FOR SALE.

THE RITUAL TIARA OF THE PRIESTS OF DAGON... OF WHICH I AM ONE!

IT MAY HAVE BEEN YOURS AT ONE TIME. BUT I GOT IT QUITE LEGALLY FROM ONE OF THOSE FEDERAL AGENTS WHO RAIDED INNSMOUTH BACK IN '28.

RAIDED, YOU SAY! DON'T YOU MEAN INVADED, TERRORIZED, PILLAGED... ALL ON THE BASIS OF UNSUBSTANTIATED TALES OF TORTURE AND MURDER?

UNSUBSTANTIATED PERHAPS... BUT NOT UNTRUE!





I SUGGEST YOU **LEAVE** NOW BEFORE I HAVE TO SHOOT YOU FOR ATTEMPTING TO **STEAL** THIS GOLD BAR FROM ME.

YOU HAVE DONE THE **EXPECTED**, SIMON PEPPER. YOUR GREED HAS **UNDONE** YOU.



THE GOLD BAR IS COVERED WITH A CHEMICAL THAT IS **ALREADY** ENTERING YOUR **BLOODSTREAM**!

UNLESS YOU AGREE TO **TURN OVER** THE TIARA AND TAKE THIS **ANTIDOTE** YOU WILL **DIE**.



GET OUT!



I'D BETTER GET THIS OUT OF VIEW BEFORE SOMEONE STARTS ASKING QUESTIONS.



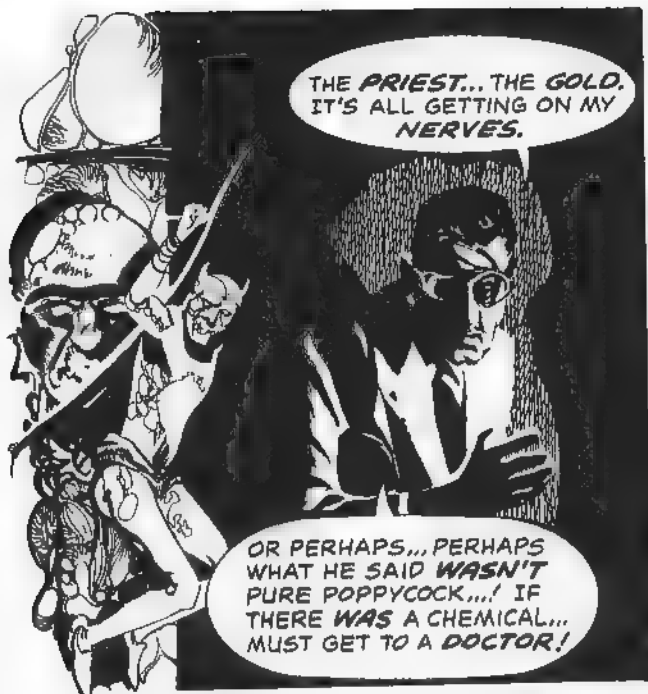
THE PRIEST...!



I TOLD YOU TO--

BLAM

N-NOTHING...!
HE WASN'T THERE!



THE *PRIEST*... THE *GOLD*.
IT'S ALL GETTING ON MY
NERVES.

OR PERHAPS... PERHAPS
WHAT HE SAID *WASN'T*
PURE POPPYCOCK...! IF
THERE *WAS* A CHEMICAL...
MUST GET TO A *DOCTOR*!



BUT... THEY COULD BE
WAITING OUTSIDE...
WAITING FOR THE
RIGHT MOMENT
TO *STEAL* IT
FROM ME!



A *CHEMICAL* ON THE *GOLD*...
A *POISON*? I'VE GOT TO WASH
IT *OFF*.



TIME *FLIES*, SIMON PEPPER!
GIVE ME WHAT I *WANT* AND
TAKE THE *ANTIDOTE* BEFORE
IT'S TOO *LATE*.



BLAMM

I'LL *GIVE* YOU
SOMETHING
ALL *RIGHT*.



N-NOTHING...! OH GOD...
NOTHING *THERE* AGAIN...!

I CAN'T TAKE
ANY *MORE* OF THIS!





MY HAND... COVERED WITH SCALES!

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?

TIME PASSED. WHEN THE MUSEUM FAILED TO OPEN THE NEXT DAY, THE AUTHORITIES INVESTIGATED.



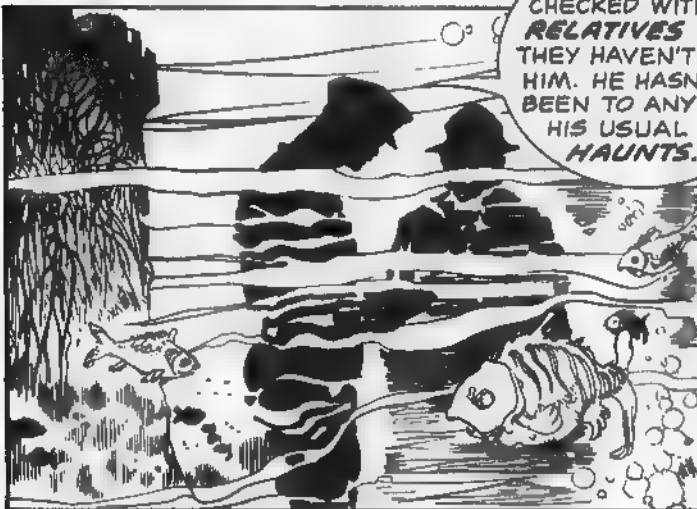
...AND WHEN I ENTERED, CHIEF, THERE WERE SIGNS OF A **DISTURBANCE**... **BULLET HOLES** AND **SMASHED DISPLAYS**.

AND MR. PEPPER IS MISSING?

AND ONE OF THE DISPLAYS, LABELED **DAGON'S TIARA**, IS ALSO MISSING.

WHAT ABOUT THIS **CLUE** YOU FOUND...?

YESSIR! I CHECKED WITH HIS **RELATIVES** AND THEY HAVEN'T SEEN HIM. HE HASN'T BEEN TO ANY OF HIS USUAL **HAUNTS**.



IT'S IN THIS **BAG**, SIR... FOUND IT IN HIS **DESK**.

A **BAR OF GOLD**?

THE **GOLD** IS NOT THE **CLUE**. LOOK AT THE **STRANGE SEA CREATURE** IMPRESSED IN THE **METAL**... RESEMBLES AN **OCTOPUS**... BUT FAR MORE **SINISTER**.



OBVIOUSLY A CREATURE OF **IMAGINATION**. IT'S NO INTEREST TO **US**.

CARRY ON AS **USUAL**.



BUT NO SOLUTIONS WERE FORTHCOMING. AND THE POLICE OF **ARKHAM, MASSACHUSETTS** STILL TALK ABOUT THAT DAY IN 1931...!

MEET COFFEE HEIRESS CHRISTINA KAVANAUGH
HAVING IT OUT WITH HUSBY, JIM, THE PRESIDENT OF HER
LATE FATHER'S FIRM.



GOOD TO THE LAST DROP!



CHRIS?

CHRIS?!

OH, MY
GOD...!

A FREAK ACCIDENT? PERHAPS... BUT TOO
LATE NOW, JIM... ACCIDENT OR NO, YOU'VE
KILLED HER.

I DIDN'T *MEAN*
TO DO THIS TO YOU,
CHRIS, DARLING...
BUT WHEN I THOUGHT
ABOUT YOU...

...ABOUT YOU
AND THAT LOUSY
WRIGHT CREEP...
->CHOKE!->

YOU DIDN'T *MEAN* TO DO THIS, JIM KAVANAUGH... OR *DID* YOU? PERHAPS YOU *RESENTED* HER YOUTHFUL *BEAUTY*... AND YOUR *PREMATURE AGE*... JUST *ENOUGH*...

I *HATE* HIM... **BILL WRIGHT**... LOUSY LITTLE V.P. IN PRODUCT IMPROVEMENT...

YES! SOMETHING *HAPPENED* THAT MORNING... THAT MORNING YOUR THOUGHTS NOW... TURN *BACK* TO...

...THAT MORNING YOU DISCOVERED WRIGHT AND *YOUR WIFE* ALONE IN *HIS OFFICE*!

CHRISTINA?! I'D SUSPECTED SHE WAS HIDING SOMETHING LATELY...

...BUT *LAUGHED* MY SUSPICIONS OFF AS *RAVINGS*... MY OWN *INSANE JEALOUSY*! BUT *NOW*...!

HURT, *ENRAGED*, YOU QUIETLY RETURNED TO YOUR OFFICE, PLANNING YOUR NEXT *MOVE*... FAILING TO *HEAR* CHRISTINA SAY...

I DON'T CARE IF YOU *DO* GO AHEAD WITH IT, BILL! I *WON'T* DO IT!!

I... I'M *SORRY* I EVER GOT INVOLVED WITH YOU IN THE *FIRST PLACE*!

YOU BUSIED YOURSELF WITH YOUR DUTIES AS *PRESIDENT* OF *MILLER FOODS*... SUCH AS THE *EXHIBIT* FOR *GUIDED TOURS* IN THE *NEW WING*...

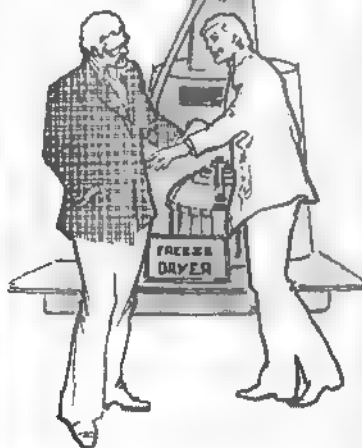
IT'S A GIANT *MOCK-UP* OF THE VACUUM PUMPS WE USE TO *FREEZE-DRY COFFEE*, MR. KAVANAUGH! AND IT *WORKS*!

THE SCHOOL KIDS WHO COME THROUGH HERE TO LEARN HOW *COFFEE* IS MADE WILL *LOVE* IT!

VERY GOOD, PEABODY! *EXCELLENT*!

AT HOME, YOUR WIFE GREW *RESTLESS*, WATCHING YOU... YOUR MOOD AS *BLACK* AND *SILENT* AS THE COFFEE YOU SIPPED EACH MORNING...

HE HASN'T SPOKEN TO ME *ALL WEEK*! HE MUST *KNOW* SOMETHING! I'M *SURE* OF IT!



THEN YOUR QUIET, SEETHING RAGE FINALLY ERUPTED INTO ARGUMENT, AND YOU TURNED ON CHRISTINA...

NO, JIM,
NO! KEEP AWAY
FROM ME!

NOW SHE'S DEAD! MAYBE YOU DIDN'T MEAN THIS TO HAPPEN, JIM... BUT IT HAS! AND YOU FEEL, NOT REGRET, BUT MERE UNCERTAINTY AS TO HOW YOU'LL DEAL WITH IT! UNTIL...

I'VE GOT IT!

THE MOST BIZARRE
IDEA I'VE EVER HAD! IT
MIGHT NOT WORK!
BUT, THEN AGAIN...

YOU
LITTLE,
NO-GOOD--

YOUR BELLY TIGHTENS WITH FORBIDDEN EXCITEMENT... AND FEAR... AND REVULSION... AS HURRIEDLY, FEVERISHLY, YOU JAM POOR CHRISTINA'S LIFELESS FORM INTO THE GARBAGE DISPOSAL!

THERE GOES THE ARM... GOOD!
HEAD'S TOO BIG... HAVE TO
CHOP IT! BUT THE LEGS'LL
GO DOWN EASY...



SOON, YOU ARE STUFFING THE
PIECES OF HER BODY INTO A
PLASTIC BAG, AND THINKING
OF... VENGEANCE!

HMMM... NICE LITTLE
CHUNKS! JUST PERFECT
FOR WHAT I HAVE IN
MIND!



HERE YOU GO,
MY DEAR! INTO THE
DEEP-FREEZE!

SLEEP WELL...
AT LEAST UNTIL
MORNING!

COME MORNING, YOU CLAMOR THE
FROZEN FRAGMENTS IN THE
AIR-TIGHT PLASTIC BAG...
THROW IT INTO YOUR CAR.
DRIVE TO THE PLANT BEFORE
IT OPENS...

...AND STEAL INSIDE... TO THE
NEW WING... WITH THE
DISMEMBERED CORPSE.

YOU PLACE THE CHUNKS OF FROZEN FLESH AND BONE INTO THE GIANT VACUUM PUMP'S BELL-JAR...

AND WHAT REMAINS IN THE BOTTOM OF THE GIANT BELL-JAR IS THE VERY LAST OF CHRISTINA

WUUUMPPP!

...AND ACTIVATE IT!

...HER FREEZE-DRIED REMAINS!

...WHICH YOU GATHER UP INTO A JAR...

GOTTA HURRY HOME! I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT THIS AFTERNOON... WITH A VERY, VERY SWEET REVENGE!

THAT AFTERNOON, YOU MAKE THE NECESSARY PHONE-CALL... AND THEN...

INVITING BILL WRIGHT OVER HERE FOR COFFEE WAS A MASTER STROKE!

HE'LL BE HORRIFIED TO LEARN WHAT HE'S DRINKING... THAT IS, IF I DECIDE TO TELL HIM, HEH, HEH, HEH!

AND AN HOUR LATER...

HERE YOU GO, WRIGHT! HAVE A CUP OF COFFEE!

THANK YOU, MR. KAVANAUGH!

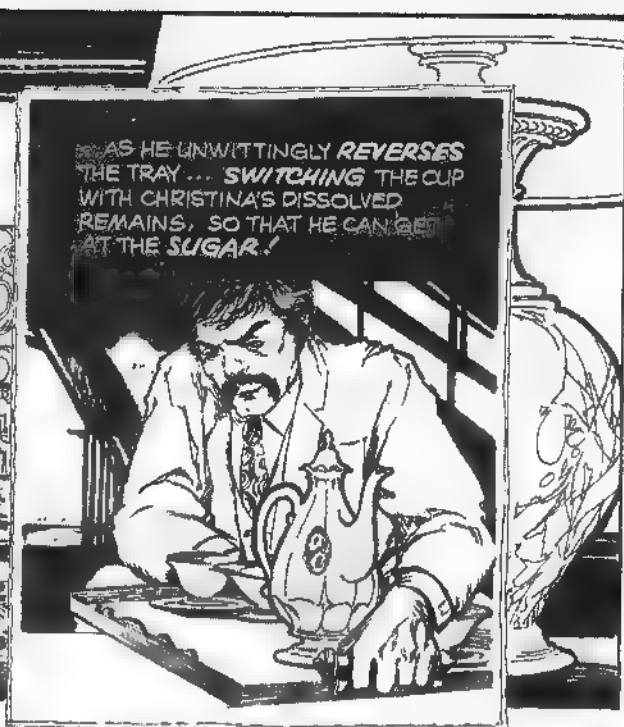
I MUST SAY YOUR INVITATION WAS A... SURPRISE! DID YOU... UH... WANT ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR?



WRIGHT... YOU'RE OUR YOUNGEST UP-AND-COMING **EXECUTIVE!** YOU'RE YOUNG, AND **BRIGHT!** WELL, I HAVE A **TERRIBLE PROBLEM** I THOUGHT YOU'D **HELP ME SOLVE!**

I'LL DO WHAT I CAN, SIR.

TURN AROUND, JIM KAVANAUGH... AND WATCH WRIGHT...



AS HE UNWITTINGLY **REVERSES** THE TRAY... **SWITCHING** THE CUP WITH CHRISTINA'S DISSOLVED REMAINS, SO THAT HE CAN GET AT THE **SUGAR!**



IT'S MY **WIFE**... SHE'S BEEN **MISSING** FOR **TWO DAYS!**

MISSING?!

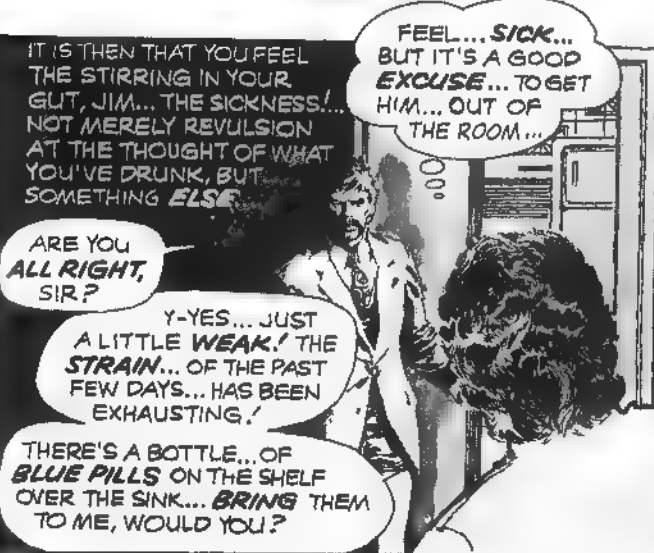
I'M AFRAID I'M GOING TO HAVE TO CALL THE **POLICE!**



...AND SUDDENLY, JIM, YOU **NOTICE** THE **SWITCH!**

YES! IT'S VERY **STRANGE!** NONE OF HER **THINGS** ARE GONE! SHE JUST... SHE... SHE...

MY GOD! HE... HE **SWITCHED CUPS!** INSTEAD OF MY OWN "PERKED", I'VE BEEN DRINKING THAT **FREEZE-DRI--**
-GAAAKK!-



IT IS THEN THAT YOU FEEL THE STIRRING IN YOUR GUT, JIM... THE SICKNESS!... NOT MERELY REVULSION AT THE THOUGHT OF WHAT YOU'VE DRUNK, BUT SOMETHING **ELSE**

FEEL... **SICK**... BUT IT'S A GOOD **EXCUSE**... TO GET HIM... OUT OF THE ROOM...

ARE YOU **ALL RIGHT**, SIR?

Y-YES... JUST A LITTLE **WEAK!** THE **STRAIN**... OF THE PAST FEW DAYS... HAS BEEN EXHAUSTING!

THERE'S A BOTTLE... OF **BLUE PILLS** ON THE SHELF OVER THE SINK... **BRING** THEM TO ME, WOULD YOU?



THAT'S RIGHT, JIM... AS SOON AS WRIGHT LEAVES THE ROOM...

I LL JUST SWITCH THESE AROUND AGAIN... SO HE GETS HIS JUST... "**DESSERT!**"



I'D SOONER **KILL MYSELF** THAN PAY YOUR **BLOOD-MONEY!**

SO OF **COURSE**, I NEVER WENT TO YOU... I'D **LOSE MY JOB!** **GAG!** SHE KNEW THAT... **CHOKE!**

HEY, I DON'T FEEL... **GULP!** TOO WELL!

CHOKE! YOU TOO?

SHE SAID... SHE'D SOONER **KILL HERSELF**, YOU SAY?

IT IS WITH CREEPING, CONSUMMATE HORROR THAT YOU SLOWLY **REALIZE**, JIM KAVANAUGH... AS YOUR KNEES **BUCKLE** AND YOU AND YOUR FORMER RIVAL **SINK** TO THE FLOOR...

UHHHHH!

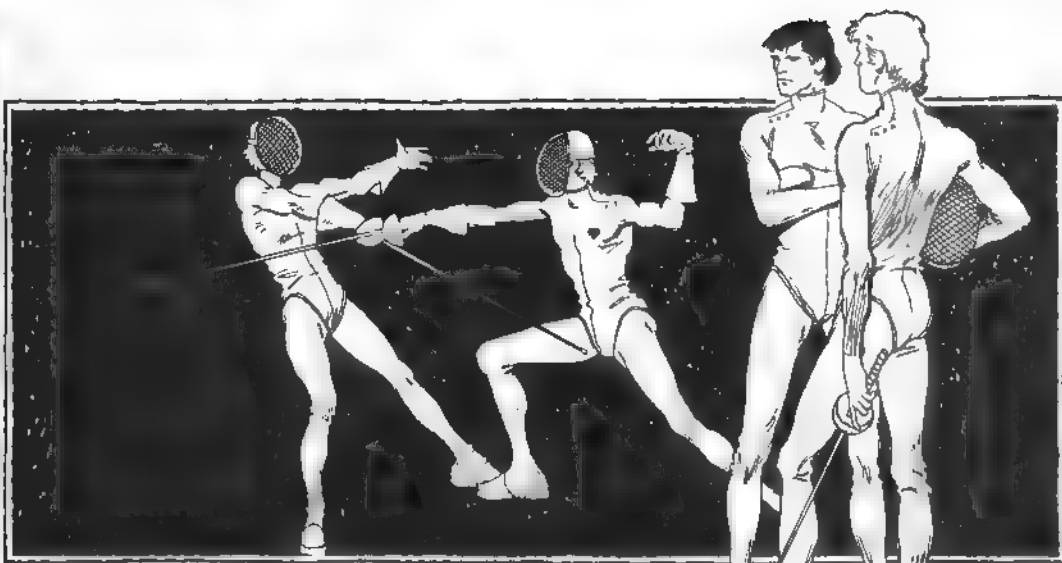
AAAKKK!

IN THE MINUTES BEFORE YOU STRUCK YOUR FATAL BLOW, POOR, FRIGHTENED, PRESSURED CHRISTINA MADE **GOOD** HER **THREAT**...

...BY TAKING **POISON**... THE **POISON** THAT **REMAINED** IN HER **SYSTEM**... FOR YOU AND YOUNG BILL WRIGHT TO **DRINK!**

TENSION... COLD, HEAVY, OPPRESSIVE. IT HUNG IN THE AIR LIKE A THICK **FOG**, BROKEN ONLY BY THE CLASH OF STEEL **BLADES**.

TO THOSE OF US WHO GREW UP IN **WINSLOW'S FERRY**, THESE SOUNDS WERE FAMILIAR. **WEDNESDAY** NIGHT FENCING SEMINARS HAD BECOME A SORT OF **PUBERTY RITE** WHICH STUDENTS OF BOTH SEXES HAD TO ENDURE AS PART OF THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM.



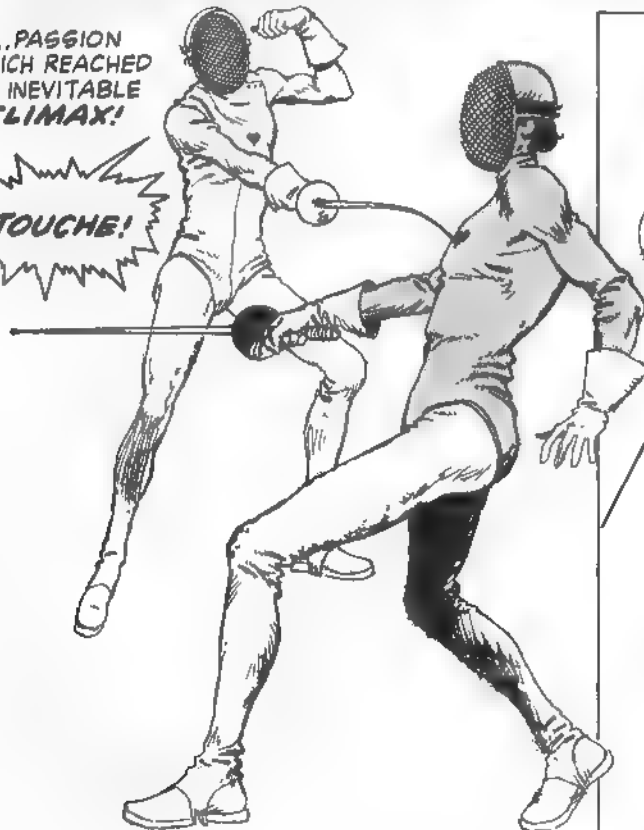
HEY MIKE! WASN'T STEPHANIE SUPPOSED TO MEET YOU HERE TONIGHT? I THOUGHT YOU WERE TAKING HER TO THE **MOVIES** AFTER CLASS!



THE CLAMOR OF STEEL GREW LOUDER, **FASTER!** THE CONTEST BUILT TO FEVERED **INTENSITY!** EVEN IN A SMALL TOWN LIKE THIS, THE DESIRE FOR COMPETITIVE **MASTERY** INCITED A CERTAIN SENSE OF **PASSION...**

...PASSION WHICH REACHED ITS INEVITABLE **CLIMAX!**

TOUCHE!



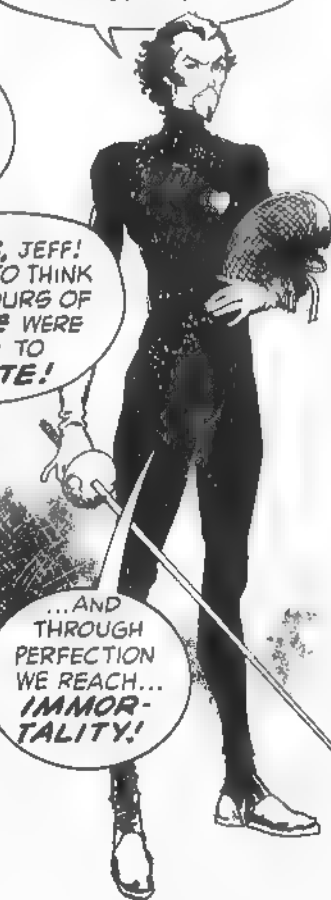
NICE JOB, WALT! YOUR **DEFENSE** HAS IMPROVED CONSIDERABLY!

THANKS, JEFF! I'D HATE TO THINK ALL MY HOURS OF **PRACTICE** WERE GOING TO **WASTE!**



I WAS! IT ISN'T LIKE HER TO BE **LATE!**

PRACTICE CAN **NEVER** GO TO WASTE, SON! THROUGH PRACTICE, WE REACH **PERFECTION...**



...AND THROUGH **PERFECTION** WE REACH... **IMMORTALITY!**

ALEXANDER DEROTH MAY HAVE BEEN A **WHIZ** OF A SWORDSMAN, BUT IN MOST **OTHER** RESPECTS, HE WAS A **WASHOUT!**

HE CAME TO OUR TOWN ABOUT A **MONTH** AGO, AFTER THE **SCHOOL COMMITTEE** REALIZED THERE'D BE A **SURPLUS** IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET. **FENCING** HAS ALWAYS BEEN A BIG **SPORT** IN WINGLOW'S FERRY...

...SO IT SEEMED **NATURAL** THAT THEY PUT THE MONEY TOWARD HIRING THE BEST **INSTRUCTOR** THEY COULD **BUY!** ALEXANDER DEROTH'S **REPUTATION** MADE HIM THE PRIME CANDIDATE...

...AND HE WASN'T HARD TO **BUY!**

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE SAT BACK, SMUG AND SELF-SATISFIED, BUT THE STUDENTS HAD **OTHER** SENTIMENTS. THERE WAS SOMETHING **DISTASTE-FUL** ABOUT THE MAN...SOMETHING **HIDDEN**... SOMETHING **EVIL**.

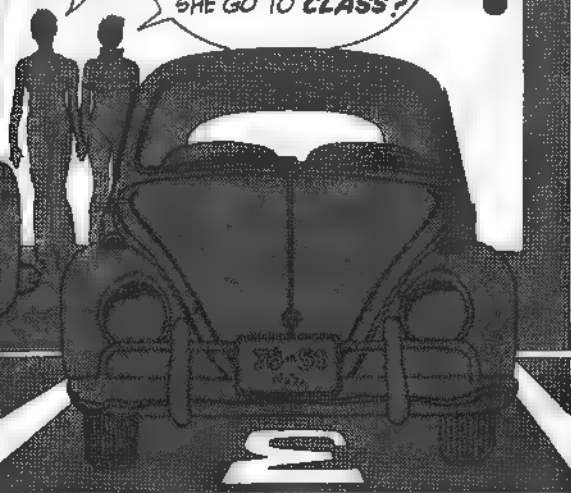


SWORDPLAY

CALL IT **INTUITION** OR CALL IT ADOLESCENT **FANTASY**, BUT WE RESPECTED HIM **LITTLE** AND **TRUSTED** HIM **LESS**.

SAY, ISN'T THAT STEPHANIE'S CAR OVER THERE?

IT SURE IS! SO SHE **DID** COME HERE AFTER ALL...BUT IF SHE'S **HERE**, WHY DIDN'T SHE GO TO **CLASS**?



MAYBE SHE MET SOME HANDSOME **FOOTBALL JOCK** AND THEY DECIDED TO **ELOPE!**

BE **SERIOUS**, B. J.! YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THAT STEPHANIE DOESN'T **LIKE** FOOTBALL!

I DUNNO, MIKE! ONE GOOD **PASS** AND YOU MIGHT BE OUT OF THE **GAME!**





IF SHE DIDN'T GO TO THE CHURCH **BASEMENT** WITH THE REST OF US, THEN SHE MUST HAVE GONE TO THE **SCHOOL** NEXT DOOR!

I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD BE **PROWLING AROUND** LIKE THIS! IF MR. JENKINS FINDS US IN THE SCHOOL AFTER HOURS, HE'LL PROBABLY CALL THE POLICE!

MAYBE YOU DON'T MIND GOING THROUGH THAT HASSLE, BUT I'M **ALREADY** ON PROBATION!

OTHERWISE SHE WOULD HAVE TAKEN HER **CAR**!

YOU'RE **RIGHT**, MIKE! THERE'S A **LIGHT** UPSTAIRS ...SHE MAY HAVE GONE UP THERE!

NEXT DOOR IN THE CHURCH **BASEMENT**, THE SEMINAR CONTINUED AS USUAL. **B.J.** AND **I** WERE BEGINNING TO WISH WE HAD **STAYED** THERE...

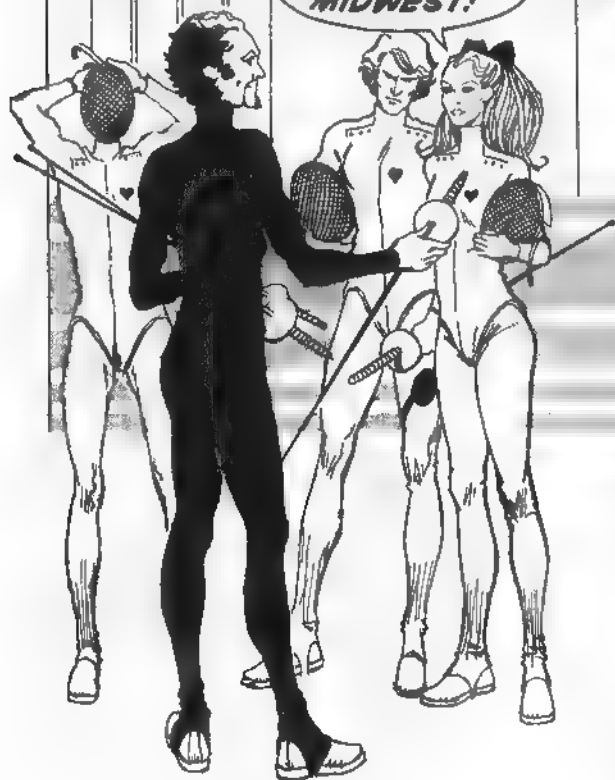
BY DAY, WINGLOW'S FERRY **HIGH SCHOOL** IS ALIVE WITH THE SOUND OF HURRIED FEET SCUFFLING THROUGH ITS CORRIDORS. BUT BY **NIGHT**, EACH SINGLE STEP ECHOES HOLLOWLY, AND SEEMS TO LINGER, WAITING FOR THE **NEXT**. AFTER A WHILE, YOU **WAIT** FOR THAT SOUND... LOOK **FORWARD** TO IT...

IF WE HAD, WE MIGHT HAVE SEEN ALEXANDER DEROTH **SMILE**, WHICH WAS A **RARE** OCCURENCE IN ITSELF! BUT EVEN **MORE** TO OUR LIKING WOULD HAVE BEEN THE **GIRL** WHO ELICITED THE RESPONSE...

YOU'RE **NEW** IN MY CLASS, AREN'T YOU? I'M SURE I WOULD HAVE REMEMBERED SUCH A **LOVELY FACE**!

YES...MY NAME'S **BRENDA HAILEY**! I'VE JUST MOVED HERE FROM THE **MIDWEST**!

...BECAUSE THE **SILENCE** IS **MADDENING**!



HEY B.J., HOW ARE WE GONNA FIND **STEPHANIE** WHEN I CAN'T EVEN SEE **YOU**...?

EASY, MIKE! I BROUGHT A **FLASHLIGHT**...

...AND **YOU'RE** ABOUT A FOOT **AWAY**!

BUT IT'S SO **DARK** IN HERE, I CAN'T EVEN FIND **THAT**!

THEY HAD ALL SEEN THE **GLINT** IN MR. DEROTH'S EYES **BEFORE**.

IT APPEARED WHEN HIS THOUGHTS WERE ON LITHE, GRACEFUL, FEMININE FLESH...EYES THAT SPOKE OF **LUST** AND HIDDEN **HUNGERS**...

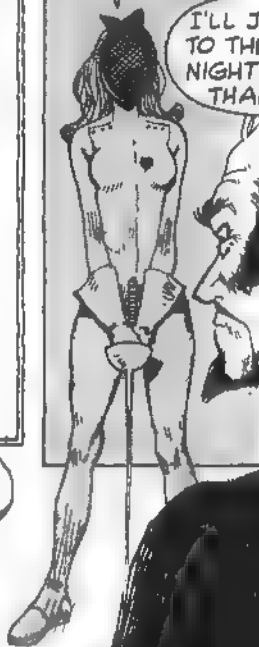
YOU HANDLE YOURSELF WELL, BRENDA!



WITH A LITTLE CLOSE TRAINING...AND PERSONAL ATTENTION...YOU COULD BE ONE OF MY BEST PUPILS!

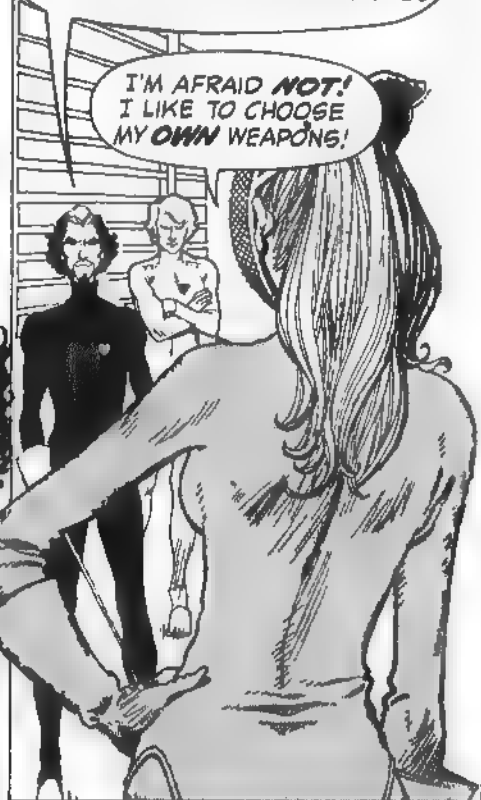
SORRY, MR. DEROTH! I'VE HEARD ABOUT YOUR CLOSE TRAINING WITH **FEMALE** STUDENTS!

I'LL JUST STICK TO THE WEDNESDAY NIGHT **CLASSES**, THANK YOU!



A **PITY!** I HAVE **OTHER** WEAPONS IN MY HOME WHICH YOU MIGHT FIND INTERESTING! IF YOU COULD HANDLE **THOSE** AS WELL AS YOU HANDLE THAT **SWORD**, IT COULD PROVE...**STIMULATING!**

I'M AFRAID **NOT!** I LIKE TO CHOOSE MY **OWN** WEAPONS!



DEEPER AND DEEPER WE PENETRATED THE DARKENED SCHOOL! ITS HALLS SEEMED LIKE ANCIENT CHRISTIAN CATACOMBS...MUSTY, LIGHTLESS. SUDDENLY WE **FROZE!**

ALRIGHT! WHAT ARE YOU BOYS **DOING** IN HERE?



MR. JENKINS, IT'S US! MIKE AND B. J.!

I **KNOW** WHO YOU ARE! I **STILL** WANT TO KNOW WHY YOU'RE **HERE** AT THIS HOUR!

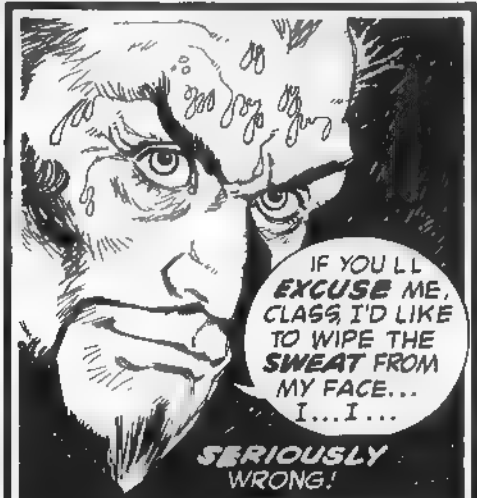
WE'RE LOOKING FOR **STEPHAN STAFFORD!** I THOUGHT SHE MAY HAVE **FORGOTT** SOMETHING AND CAME BACK HERE TO--



HEY, B. J.! **LOOK!**

IN THE SCHOOL GYMNASIUM, ALL HAD GROWN **QUIET**. THE MORE **PERCEPTIVE** STUDENTS HAD NOTICED A SUBTLE **CHANGE** IN ALEXANDER DEROTH, FOLLOWING THE EXCHANGE WITH BRENDA HAILEY:

THE **SLOWER** ONES NOTICED IT **LATER**...WHEN HE DEMONSTRATED A NEW **MANEUVER**. HE TOOK WALT KINNEY, AN **AVERAGE** FENCER TO **ASSIST** HIM...AND IN THREE SWIFT MOVES...WAS **VANQUISHED** BY HIS STUDENT! THAT'S WHEN **EVERYBODY** KNEW SOMETHING WAS **WRONG!**



IF YOU LL **EXCUSE** ME, CLASS I'D LIKE TO WIPE THE **SWEAT** FROM MY FACE... I...I...

SERIOUSLY WRONG!

THE BROOM CLOSET SMELLED OF YESTERDAY'S **TRASH**, BUT IT WAS DARK, SECLUDED... **PRIVATE**. THOSE WERE THE QUALITIES THAT LURED DEROTH TO ITS CLUTTERED **CONFINES**.

THAT **NEW GIRL** ...SOMETHING ABOUT HER...SEEMS TO HAVE DISTURBED MY **EQUILIBRIUM!**

OH, **EXCUSE** ME, MR. DEROTH! I WAS--

WHA--?

YOU DIDN'T LOOK AT ALL **WELL** OUT THERE! I WAS AFRAID YOU WERE **ILL**, SO I CAME BACK TO SEE IF I COULD **HELP!**

NO, MY DEAR! THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN **DO!** WE'D BEST GET BACK TO MY **CLASS** NOW!

THERE WAS SOMETHING **THERE**, IN THE CORNER OF THE ROOM, HUDDLED UP LIKE AN ARMADILLO. WE COULDN'T **SEE** IT... NOT **CLEARLY** ANYWAY... BUT SOMEHOW I **SENSED** WHAT IT HAD TO BE! SO DID B.J., 'CAUSE THE LOOK ON HIS FACE WAS LIKE NOTHIN' I'D EVER SEEN BEFORE!

WE DIDN'T THINK THINGS LIKE THAT **HAPPENED** IN WINSLOW'S FERRY!

WHEN DEROTH CAME BACK TO HIS CLASS, HE WAS HIS CALM, SARDONIC SELF. IT WAS A **SHAME**... FOR THAT BRIEF MOMENT BEFORE, HE SEEMED ALMOST **HUMAN** AND THE STUDENTS ACTUALLY **FELT** SOMETHING FOR HIM BESIDES **REVULSION**.

BUT THAT MOMENT HAD **PASSED**...

...AND LIKE **MOST** FLEETING MOMENTS, IT WOULD NEVER BE **RECALLED** AGAIN!

ALL RIGHT, CLASS! AGAIN I WILL ATTEMPT TO DEMONSTRATE A **DOUBLE-DISENGAGE!**

HE ACTED LIKE I WAS SOME SORT OF ALIEN **CREATURE!**

AAAAAH! HE'S JUST UPSET CAUSE WALT **BEAT** HIM!

THE **TENSION** HAD **SETTLED** AGAIN, BUT THIS TIME IT WAS **DIFFERENT**. IT WENT **BEYOND** THE MERE EXCITEMENT OF TWO MEN LOCKED IN **SWIFT COMBAT**... IT TOUCHED SOMETHING SO **COLD**, SO PREGNANT WITH LATENT **MENACE**... IT EXCEEDED **DESCRIPTION**!

AND ITS **WOMB** LAY SOMEWHERE IN **DEROTH'S EYES**!

BRENDA IS GOING TO **ASSIST** ME IN THIS **DEMONSTRATION**!

SOMETHING IN HIS TONE OF VOICE... A **BARELY PERCEPTIBLE QUIVER OF EXCITEMENT**... SEEMED TO **NURSE** THE TENSION! WALT FELT AN URGENT DESIRE TO **SHOUT**... TO **STOP** THIS THING BEFORE IT **BEGAN**!

BUT HE **DIDN'T**!

EN GARDE!

SWIFT FOILS **SLICED** THROUGH THE AIR, PROBING, DARTING, RETREATING. THEIR RINGING BECAME LIKE A **MELODY**, REACHING ITS **CRESCENDO** IN A FRENZIED BLUR OF **SILVER SOUND** SUDDENLY...

WAIT, MR. DEROTH! YOUR **SWORD**...

MEANWHILE, OUR LIGHT SOUGHT OUT THE DARKEST CORNERS OF THE SCHOOL. IT SOUGHT OUT **ANSWERS**... ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS NEITHER **B.J.** NOR **MR. JENKINS** NOR **MYSELF** DARED TO WHISPER ALOUD AND FINALLY, IT **STOPPED** SEEKING!

THE PROTECTIVE RUBBER TIP IS **MISSING**!

IT **FOUND**!

STEPHANIE!

TOUCHE!

M-MY NECK... IT'S **BLEEDING**!

WITH **ANSWERS**, THERE **INEVITABLY** COME **MORE QUESTIONS**!

GOOD LORD... WHAT COULD HAVE DONE SUCH A **THING**!?

THOSE **SCARS** ON HER NECK... LIKE SOMETHIN' OUT OF A **MONSTER MOVIE**!



BRENDA'S SLENDER FINGERS WENT INSTINCTIVELY TO HER **THROAT**. SHE FELT THE WARM BLOOD **TRICKLE** SLOWLY, GENTLY OVER HER FLESH...AND FELT THE **EYES** OF ALEXANDER DEROOTH UPON HER.



HE GAVE NO **THOUGHT** TO THE STUDENTS WHO LOOKED ON IN **HORROR, PARALYSED** BY THEIR FEAR! HE GAVE NO **THOUGHT** TO THE FACT THAT TOMORROW HE WOULD HAVE TO **FLEE** WINSLOW'S FERRY...



DEROOTH INCHED FORWARD, AND THOSE DEMON-EYES BECAME A SMOULDERING INFERNO OF **DESIRE...OF LUST...OF BLOOD-THIRST!**



HE GAVE NO **THOUGHT** TO ANYTHING EXCEPT BRENDA'S SOFT, TENDER **THROAT** AND THE RICH, RED **BLOOD** THAT SLITHERED GRADUALLY DOWNWARD...

MIKE AND I DIDN'T SEE WHAT HAPPENED TO BRENDA, OF COURSE. BUT NEXT DOOR IN THE SCHOOL, WE **EMPATHIZED** WITH WHAT SHE MUST HAVE FELT...



...FOR THAT MOMENT, THE **CORPSE** OF STEPHANIE STAFFORD BEGAN TO **BREATHE**, TO **MOVE**, TO **RISE...TO THIRST...**

THAT WAS THE **END** OF OUR WEDNESDAY NIGHT FENCING SEMINARS. THE LAST SESSION HAD **DECREASED** THE **POPULATION** OF WINSLOW'S FERRY BY **FIVE**...FOUR STUDENTS, AND A FENCING INSTRUCTOR WHO VANISHED UNDER MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES! AND IN A TOWN THE SIZE OF **OURS**, SUCH A SITUATION COULD BE CONSIDERED **CRITICAL!**

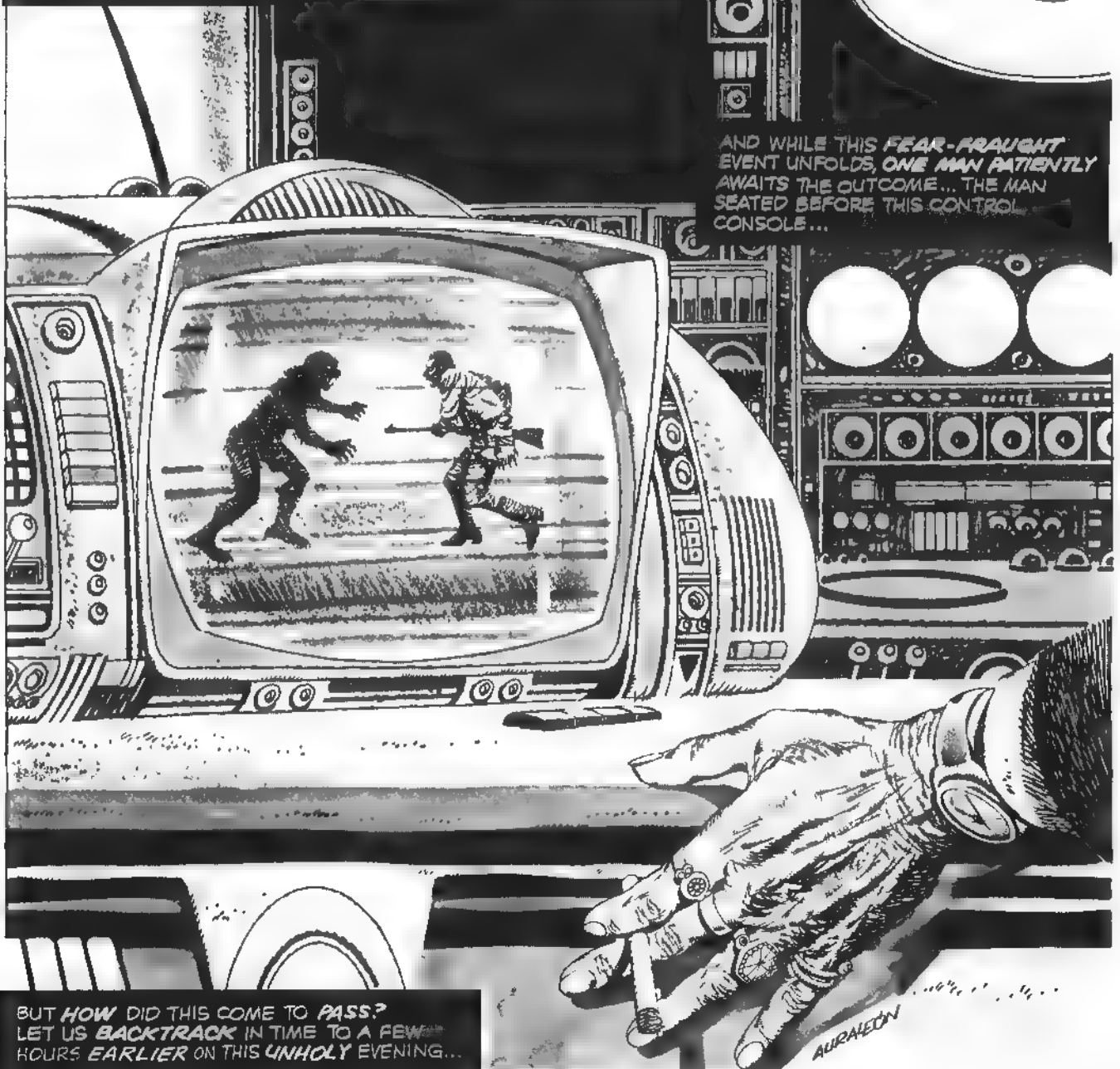
THAT'S WHY B.J. AND I HAVE **LEFT** WINSLOW'S FERRY ...THERE JUST WASN'T ENOUGH TO GO **AROUND!**



READY FOR A **SANGUINE SAGA**,
GANG? THIS TALE CONCERNS A **MULTI-**
MILLIONAIRE WHO LIKES TO RAISE A
SPECIAL BREED OF HOLY HORROR-
HOBBY THAT GUARANTEES...

PREY FOR ME!

AN **EVER-FLICKERING VIDEO SCREEN** TEMPERS
THE **AWESOME REALITY OF BLOODY BATTLE** WITH
SOFT GRAYS AND BLURRED BLACKS...



AND WHILE THIS **FEAR-FRAUGHT**
EVENT UNFOLDS, **ONE MAN PATIENTLY**
AWAITS THE **OUTCOME...** THE MAN
SEATED BEFORE THIS **CONTROL**
CONSOLE...

BUT **HOW** DID THIS COME TO **PASS?**
LET US **BACKTRACK** IN TIME TO A FEW
HOURS **EARLIER** ON THIS **UNHOLY EVENING...**

...WHEN A GLEAMING LIMOUSINE ARRIVES AT A SECLUDED MANSION IN THE ADIRONDACKS...

ANOTHER ONE, MR. GUILFORD?

CORRECT, NADIR! OUR ILLUSTRIOUS GUEST IS **SAMUEL SMITH**, TEXAS OIL KINGPIN... AND PART-TIME **HUNTER**!

SEE THAT HE IS MADE... COMFORTABLE!

DINNER HAS BEEN DELAYED, MR. SMITH. PERHAPS IN THE MEANTIME YOU WOULD ENJOY... A DRINK?

BOURBON, HUH? RIGHT NICE OF YUH, BOY!

HERE'S MUD... AND ALL THAT!

MUH HEAD... EVERYTHIN'S SPINNIN'...!

BLASTED DRINK... MUST'VE BEEN DRUGGED!

BUT AFTER A BRIEF INTERLUDE OF NOTHINGNESS, HE SLOWLY AWAKENS TO FIND...

MUH CLOTHES! THEY'RE DIFFERENT! IS THIS SOME DAMN PRANK?!

I CAN ASSURE YOU, MY DEAR SMITH... THIS IS NO JOKE!

THERE IS A NAMELESS **BLANK SPOT** AT THIS POINT FOR THE BURLY TEXAN...



BUT HOW
THOUGHTLESS
OF ME!
INTRODUCTIONS
ARE IN ORDER!

THE RATHER
LARGE GENTLEMAN
AT YOUR SIDE... IS
MY LOYAL SERVANT,
NADIR...

... I, OF COURSE,
AM **ALEXANDER**
GUILEFORD THE
THIRD...

AND DIRECTLY **BELOW**
... IS THE INSTRUMENT OF
YOUR IMPENDING **DEATH!**



T-THAT **CRITTER...**!
'T **LOOKS LIKE...** A
WEREWOLF.

ALL WILL BE **EXPLAINED**
IN DUE TIME! **NADIR!** GIVE
OUR ANIMAL-HUNTING
FRIEND HIS **EQUIPMENT!**

THIS RIFLE CONTAINS
ONE SHELL, MR.
SMITH... A **SILVER**
BULLET. IT WILL BE
YOUR **SOLE WEAPON...**

I TRUST
YOU ARE
ACQUAINTED
WITH ITS USE.



HE
KNOWS,
NADIR...

THE **WEAPON** IS EMPLOYED IN THE **SENSELESS DESTRUCTION... OF LIVING THINGS...**"

...HAPLESS CREATURES THAT OUR HONORED **GUEST** HAS METHODICALLY **TRACKED, HUNTED AND SLAIN!**"

BUT TONIGHT, MY DEAR SMITH, THE **TABLES** WILL BE TURNED... THE **ODDS** SUBTLY ALTERED.'

TONIGHT, IT IS THE **WOLF-MAN** WHO SHALL BE **HUNTER...** AND YOU, THE **PREY!**

HOWEVER, JUST TO MAKE THINGS **SLIGHTLY...** INTERESTING-- THE **WEREWOLF** HAS BEEN GIVEN YOUR **SCENT!**

I AM AFRAID, MY **DISTINGUISHED** FRIEND, THE BEAST WILL **ZEALOUSLY** STALK YOU EVERY **INCH** OF THE WAY.'

IT'S ALL QUITE **SIMPLE...** YOU HAVE **SIXTY SECONDS** TO REACH THE SURROUNDING ESTATE! **FREEDOM** LIES BEYOND..

LET ME GO, **GUILEFORD...** OR AH'LL BLOW THIS BOY'S **BRAINS** OUT.'





NADIR HAS BEEN A LOYAL, TRUSTWORTHY **EMPLOYEE**... I'LL MISS HIM. WHEN YOU PULL THE **TRIGGER**... I WILL **RELEASE** THE WEREWOLF!

SO! A **SINGLE BULLET** FOR MY **SERVANT**... OR THE **MONSTER**? THE CHOICE, SIR, IS **YOURS!**



AND IN CASE YOU'RE HAVING **OTHER THOUGHTS**... DON'T TRY TO SLAY **ME!** THIS SPECIALLY-CONSTRUCTED **WINDOW** IS **BULLET-PROOF!**

DAMN YUH, GUILFORD! YUH WIN!



I **ALWAYS** DO!

YOU HAVE **SIXTY SECONDS**.. STARTING **NOW!** **GOOD LUCK**, MR. SMITH... AND **GOOD HUNTING!**

SO, A **DESPERATE** MAN FLEES FOR HIS LIFE... AS MANY **OTHERS** HAVE DONE BEFORE HIM!



AND ONE MINUTE SWIFTLY **FLIES**...



HUMMMMMMM

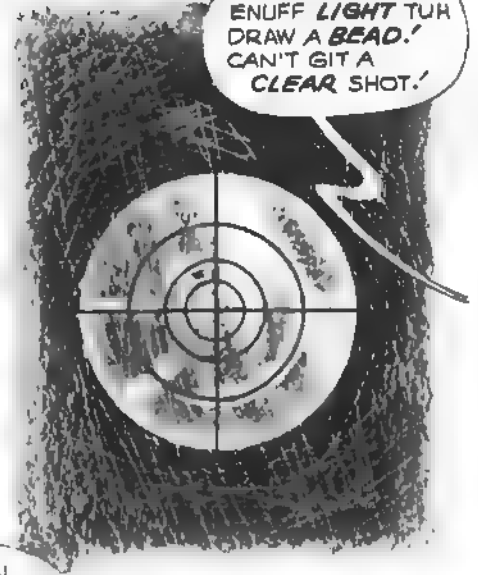
SNARL-L-L-L!



GAWD! THERE IS...! STANDIN' AROUND. TRYIN' TUH GIT ITS BEARINGS!

WITH LUCK... AH MIGHT BEABLE TUH PICK IT OFF!

NAW! NOT ENUFF LIGHT TUH DRAW A BEAD! CAN'T GIT A CLEAR SHOT!



HAVE TUH MAKE A **BLASTED** RUN FOR IT...WITH THAT THING LICKIN' AT MUH HEELS!

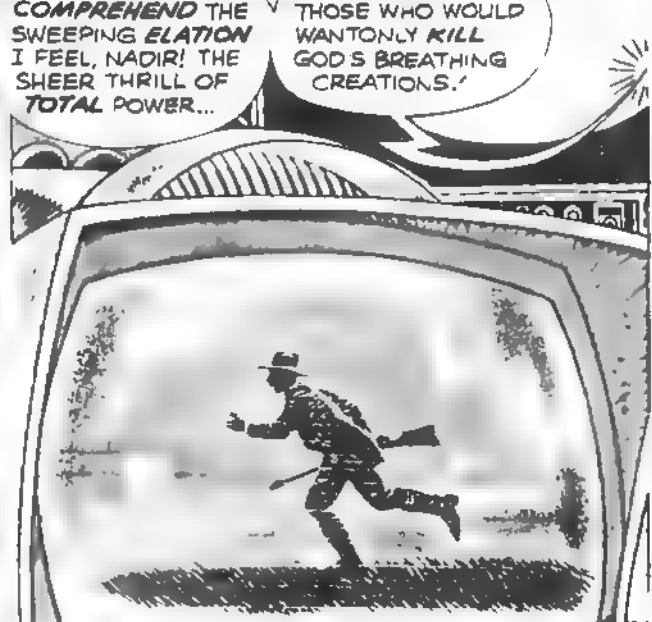
MEBBE AH CAN THROW THE **CRITTER** OFF MUH TRAIL... BY **CIRCLIN'** BACK TUH THE HOUSE!



NO ONE CAN **COMPREHEND** THE SWEEPING **ELATION** I FEEL, NADIR! THE SHEER THRILL OF **TOTAL POWER...**

...PUNISHING THOSE WHO WOULD WANTONLY KILL GOD'S BREATHING CREATIONS!

SNIFF! SNIFF-F-F!





I *KNOW*, MR. GUILFORD!
I HAVE READ IT ON YOUR FACE
MANY TIMES SINCE THAT DAY
YOUR WEALTH SAVED ME
FROM BEING *EXECUTED*
FOR THE MURDER OF A
POACHER IN MY
HOMELAND.

BUT WE MUST
HAVE *CARE* THAT
IN SERVING THE
CAUSE OF A GOD
... WE DO NOT
USURP HIS RIGHTFUL
POWER!



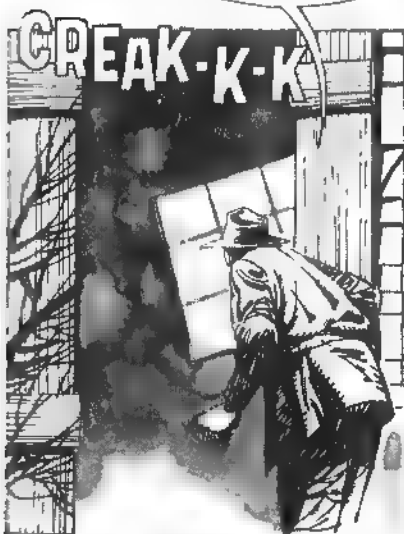
MUH SIDE IS
ACHIN'... LUNGS
FEEL ON *FIRE!* CAN
BARELY TAKE
ANOTHER ST--

WAIT!
THET *GARDENER'S*
SHACK!



JUST WHAT
THE *DOCTOR*
ORDERED!

BET AH CAN
FIND SOME
BLASTED *ROPE*...
AN' CLIMB THE
BLAZES *OUT* OF
HERE!



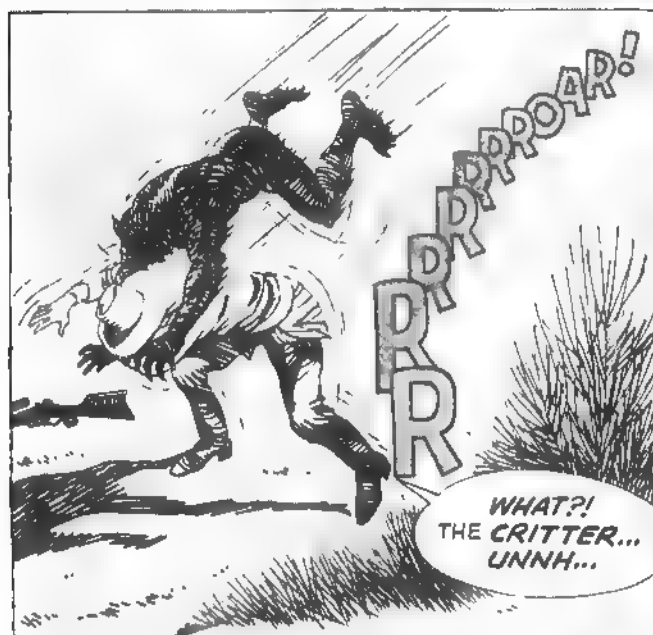
PLASTIC
CLOTHESLINE!



STUFF IS *WEAK*...
BUT IT'LL HOLD MUH
WEIGHT LONG
ENUFF...



... TO GIT MUH
CARCASS **OVER** THE
WALL **ALIVE** AND IN
ONE PIECE.



WHAT?!
THE **CRITTER**...
UNNH...



THING **GUESSED**
AH'D COME TUH THIS
SPOT.' EVERY **OTHER**
VICTIM PROBABLY
TRIED TH' SAWK
THING.



CAN'T EVEN
AIM... **FLAT**
OUT ON MUH
BACK...!

GOT TUH STOP
IT FROM **RIPPIN'** OPEN
MUH THROAT...!





WHAT'S
KEEPIN' IT
UP?!

AH CRACKED
ITS SKULL CLEAN
OPEN...!

THE BLASTED
BEAST MOVES SO
FAST...!

CAN'T DODGE
IT ANYMORE...!

SN-N-N-NARL!

BUT AH CAN USE
JUDO... LIKE AH LEARNED
IN THE MARINES...!

...THEN, BLAST
THE LIVIN' HELL
OUT OF IT!

TA-CLICK!
B-A-A-A-M



EXCELLENT
SHOT... DON'T YOU
THINK, NADIR

IT WOULD SEEM
OUR BRUISED AND
BATTERED GUEST
IS A SKILLED
MARKSMAN!

BAAAAM!!



"UNFORTUNATELY, I FEAR THE SHOT DID NOT COME **SOON** ENOUGH TO PREVENT THE BEAST FROM **REACHING** HIM BEFORE IT DIES."



NO! **YAHHHH!**

...AS AN **INFECTIOUS BITE** IS ABOUT TO BE **INFLECTED...**



RAZOR-CRUEL CLAWS CUT DEEP WITH **MINDLESS FURY...**



...THE **ACCURSED BITE** OF THE **WEREWOLF!**



HURRY, PLEASE... BEFORE THE **MIST-SHROUDED MOON** REAPPEARS TO **TRANSFORM** OUR LACERATED GUEST...

INTO A **WOLF-LIKE BEING** LIKE THE ONE THAT BIT HIM!



BUT THE **GIGANTIC SERVANT** DOES **NOT** NEED ORDERS TO WORK WITH THE **UTMOST SPEED.**



HE IS ALL TOO AWARE OF THE **TREMBLING FORM**, AS IT BEGINS TO SHIFT TO SOMETHING **OTHER** THAN HUMAN... IN THE RE-EMERGING **LUNAR LIGHT!**

IT IS **FINALLY OVER, NADIR!** RETRIEVE THE **TEXAN'S CUMBERSOME BODY** FOR ME...

THIS IS ALMOST
BETTER THAN SEEING
THE BEAST RIP **HIM**
TO SHREDS.

DO YOU NOT FIND
IT **IRONIC**, NADIR?
STILL **MORE** HUNTERS
SHALL SOON **PERISH**...
AT **MR. SMITH'S**
HAND?

NADIR...?

I AM
RIGHT **HERE**!
I THOUGHT YOU
MIGHT LIKE TO
TOAST YOUR
SUCCESS!

NO,
MR. GUILFORD
TO THE RIGHTS
OF MEN...

...AND
GODS.

AHH! THANK
YOU! LET US DRINK
DEEP, NADIR...

...TO
LIFE!

W-WHAT...?
NADIR... WHY
DO I...

... SO...
SUDDENLY...
FEEL...

UHHHH!~

THERE IS AN **UNKNOWN** LAPSE
IN TIME, UNTIL...

UHHH! MUST
HAVE **BLACKED
OUT!** TOO MUCH
PRESSURE AND.

**THESE
CLOTHES!!**
NADIR! WHAT IS
THE **MEANING**
OF THIS?!

IT IS AS I SAID,
MR. GUILFORD! YOU
HAVE GROWN TO LOVE
PLAYING GOD... TOO
MUCH! I HAVE READ
IT IN YOUR FACE.

EVEN **TONIGHT**
WHEN IT WAS **MY**
LIFE IN THE BALANCE
AS WELL AS THOSE
WE CONDEMN
TO BE
HUNTED!



YOU HAVE
PLAYED LIKE ONE
OF THE GODS...
NOW TRUST YOUR
SOUL TO THEM!
YOU HAVE **SIXTY
SECONDS!**

NADIR!
DON'T! I HAVE
MONEY! WE
CAN --

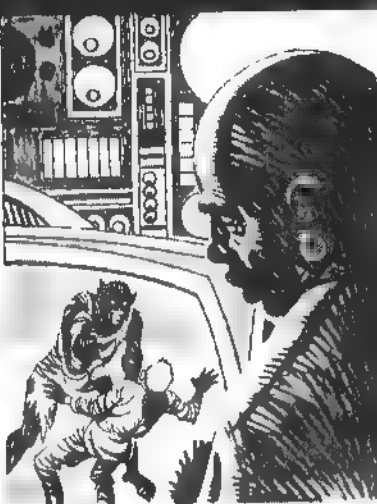
**FIFTY-
EIGHT
SECONDS!**

ARGUING IS **USELESS!** SO,
A **DESPERATE MAN**
FLEES FOR HIS LIFE... AS
MANY **OTHERS** HAVE DONE
BEFORE HIM!

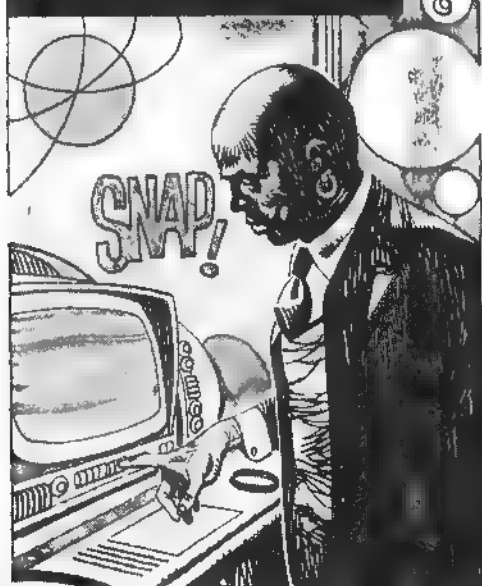


THE SOLEMN **BLACK** CANNOT
GAUGE HIS ACTIONS AS **RIGHT**
OR **WRONG...**

... HE CAN ONLY **WATCH!**



AND **AFTER** HAVING WATCHED...



... HE CAN ONLY **LEAVE...**

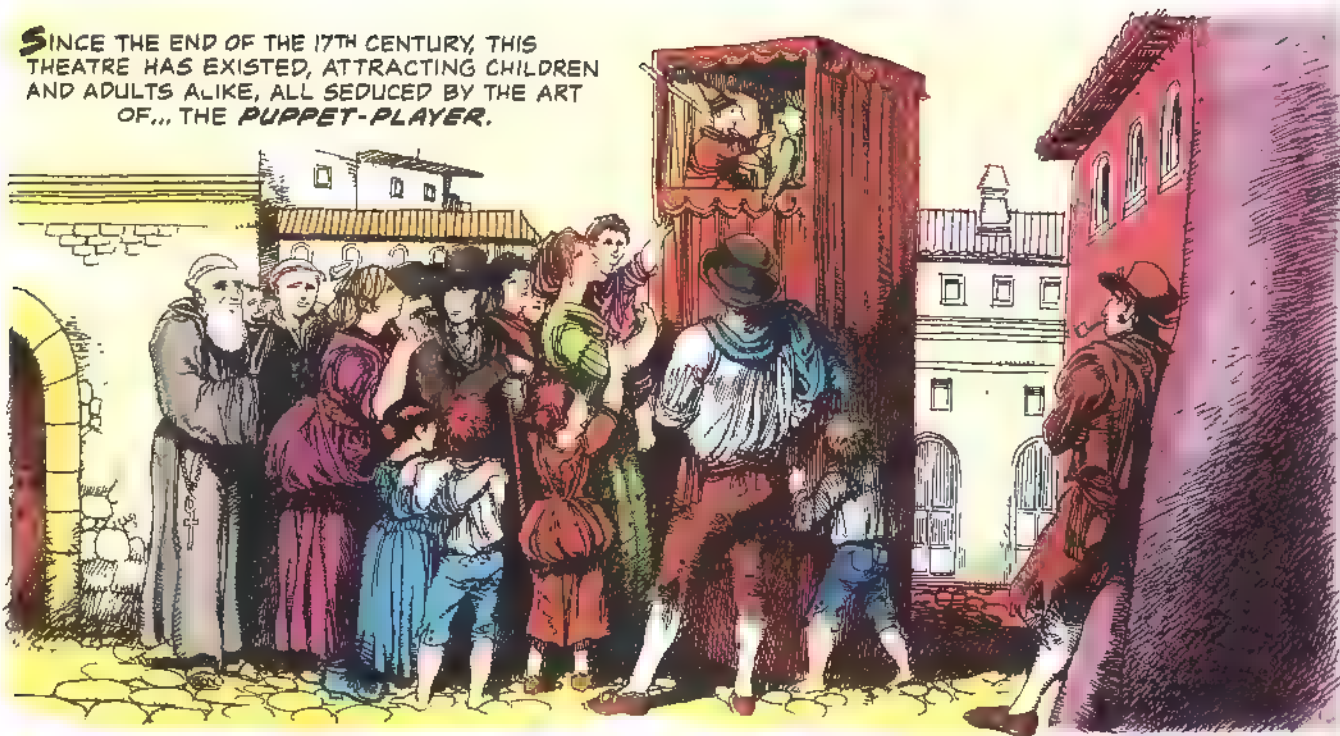


...AND PRAY FOR THE SOUL OF A
DOOMED MAN! A MAN NAMED...
GUILFORD!



PROLOGUE

SINCE THE END OF THE 17TH CENTURY, THIS THEATRE HAS EXISTED, ATTRACTING CHILDREN AND ADULTS ALIKE, ALL SEDUCED BY THE ART OF OF... THE **PUPPET-PLAYER**.

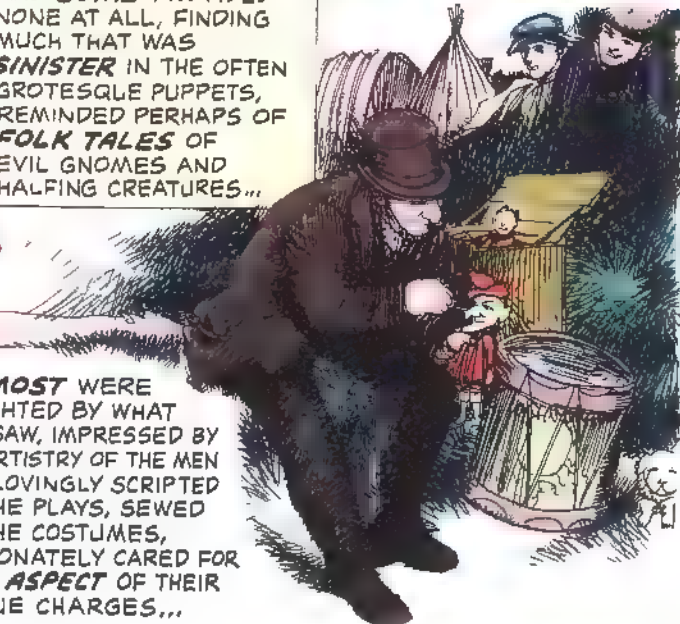


THESE ARTISTS TRAVELED FROM TOWN TO TOWN, DRAWING FASCINATED CROWDS IN PUBLIC SQUARES TO WITNESS PERFORMANCES BY THEIR COLORFUL CREATIONS, LIVING ON WHATEVER GRATUITIES THE SPECTATORS COULD PROVIDE...



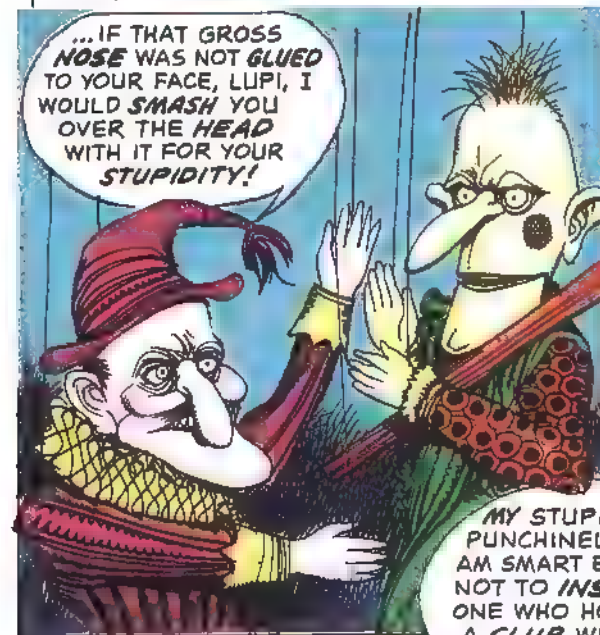
AND **SOME** PROVIDED NONE AT ALL, FINDING MUCH THAT WAS **SINISTER** IN THE OFTEN GROTESQUE PUPPETS, REMINDED PERHAPS OF **FOLK TALES** OF EVIL GNOMES AND HALPING CREATURES...

BUT **MOST** WERE DELIGHTED BY WHAT THEY SAW, IMPRESSED BY THE ARTISTRY OF THE MEN WHO LOVINGLY SCRIPTED ALL THE PLAYS, SEWED ALL THE COSTUMES, PASSIONATELY CARED FOR EVERY **ASPECT** OF THEIR UNIQUE CHARGES...



...GINO MALASPINA MIGHT HAVE BEEN SUCH A MAN. BUT HE DID WHAT HE DID WITHOUT PASSION, AND MOST CERTAINLY...WITHOUT LOVE.

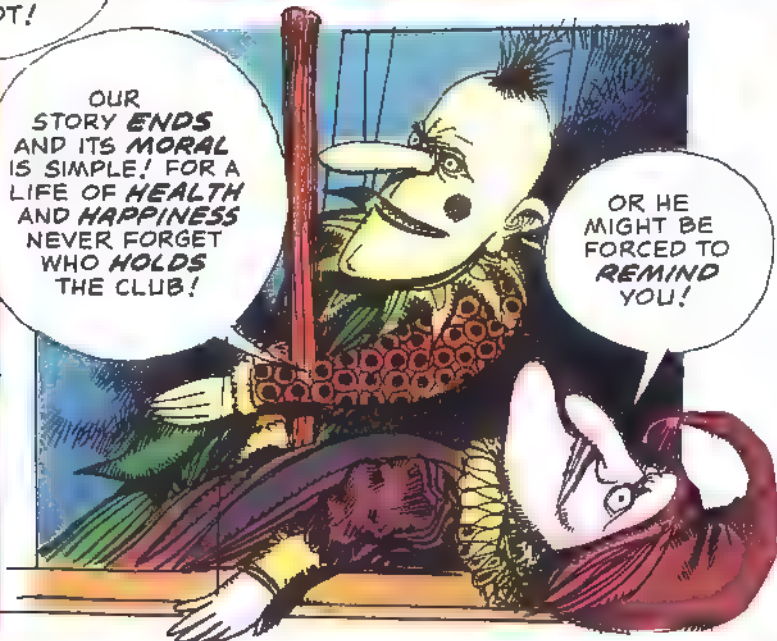
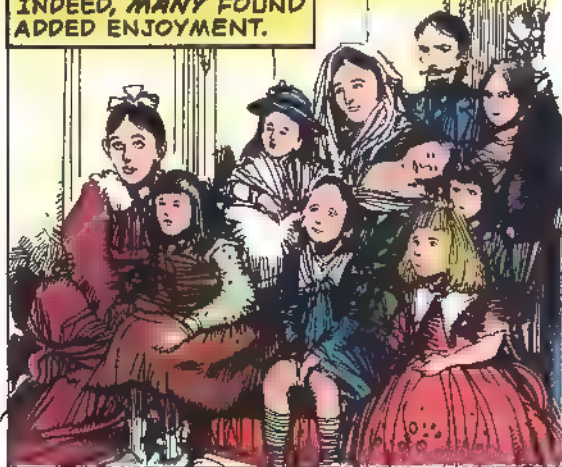
FOR SOME TIME NOW, GINO HAD FELT IT GROWING WITHIN HIM... A HATRED OF THIS LIFE, A LONGING TO ESCAPE IT. MORE AND MORE IT SEEMED THE STRINGS BOUND HIM MUCH AS THE FIGURES ON THE OTHER END...



MY STUPIDITY, PUNCHINELLO? I AM SMART ENOUGH NOT TO INSULT ONE WHO HOLDS A CLUB WHEN I DO NOT!

THESE BEATINGS GREW MORE SAVAGE EACH PERFORMANCE. BUT SUCH WAS THE HARSHNESS OF THE TIMES, THAT AUDIENCES EASILY ACCEPTED THE CRUEL HUMOR...

INDEED, MANY FOUND ADDED ENJOYMENT.

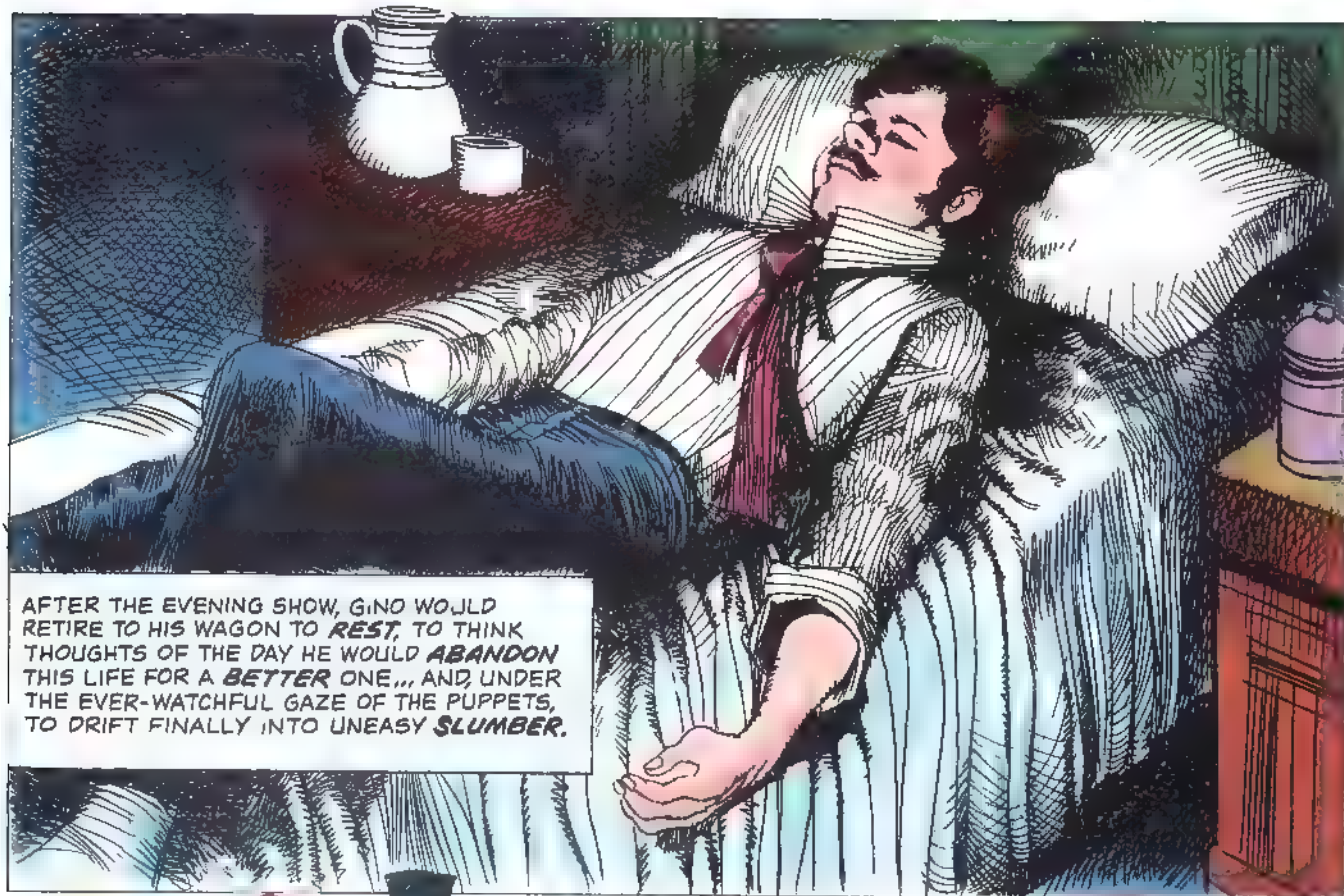


OR HE MIGHT BE FORCED TO REMIND YOU!

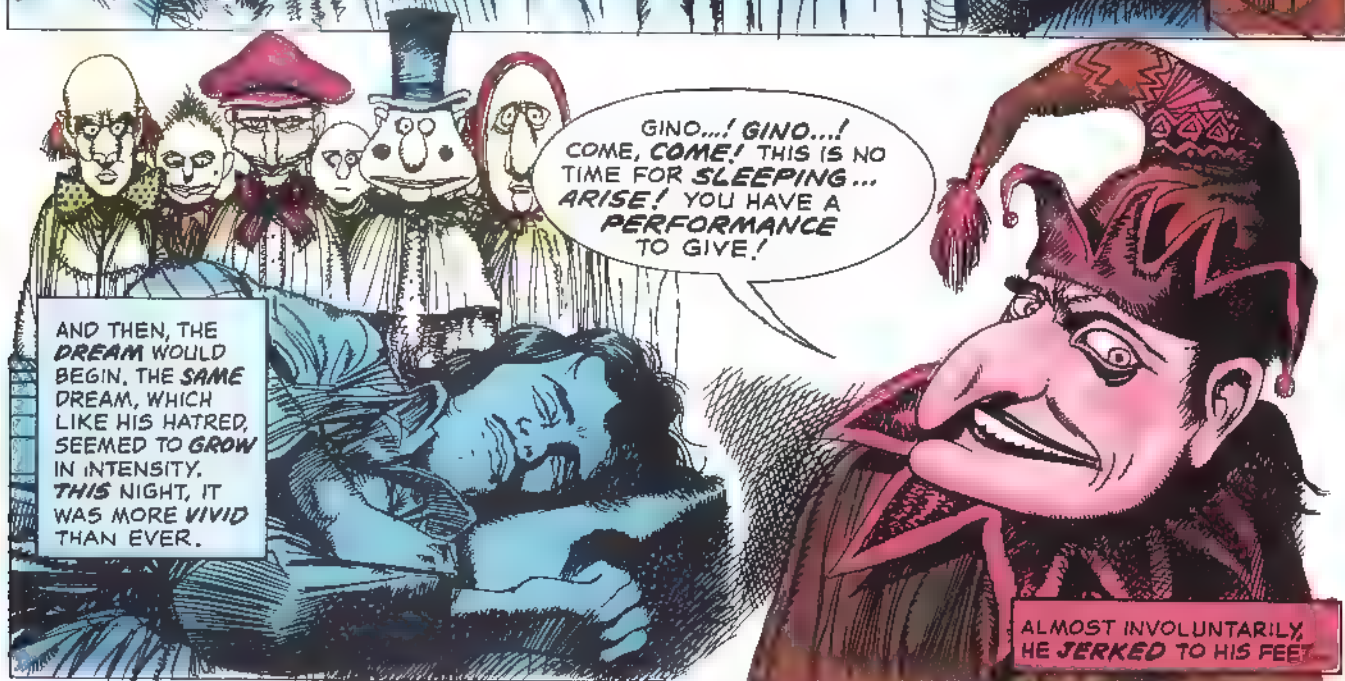


WELL, DEAR READER, AFTER THAT *PROLOGUE*, I DON'T BELIEVE WE'LL HAVE TO BEAT YOU OVER THE *HEAD* WITH THE FACT THAT THIS STORY DEALS WITH *MANNIKINS* AND THEIR *MANIPULATORS*, OR *PUPPETS* AND THE...

PUPPET-PLAYER!



AFTER THE EVENING SHOW, GINO WOULD RETIRE TO HIS WAGON TO *REST*, TO THINK THOUGHTS OF THE DAY HE WOULD *ABANDON* THIS LIFE FOR A *BETTER* ONE... AND, UNDER THE EVER-WATCHFUL GAZE OF THE PUPPETS, TO DRIFT FINALLY INTO UNEASY *SLUMBER*.



AND THEN, THE *DREAM* WOULD BEGIN, THE *SAME* DREAM, WHICH LIKE HIS HATRED, SEEMED TO *GROW* IN INTENSITY. *THIS* NIGHT, IT WAS MORE *VIVID* THAN EVER.

GINO...! GINO...!
COME, COME! THIS IS NO
TIME FOR *SLEEPING*...
ARISE! YOU HAVE A
PERFORMANCE
TO GIVE!

ALMOST INVOLUNTARILY,
HE *JERKED* TO HIS FEET



YOU'VE BEEN **FORGETTING** YOURSELF OF LATE, GINO! AND SO THESE **REHEARSALS** ARE NECESSARY!

STRINGS ATTACHED TO MY BODY...! PULLING ME... TUGGING ME...!

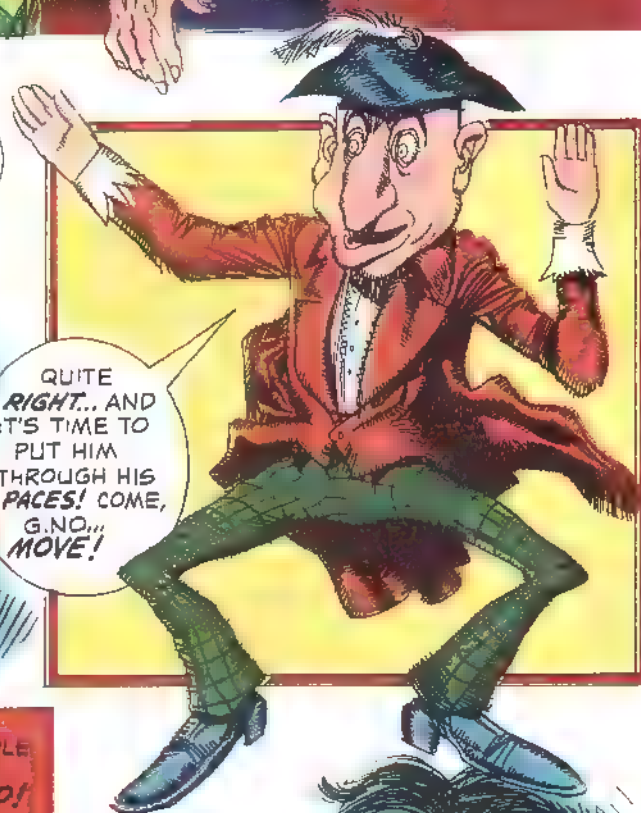
MOTHER OF GOD...! I'VE BECOME ONE OF MY OWN **PUPPETS**! I'VE-- BUT IT'S ONLY A **DREAM**! I MUST KEEP **SAYING** THAT! IT'S--



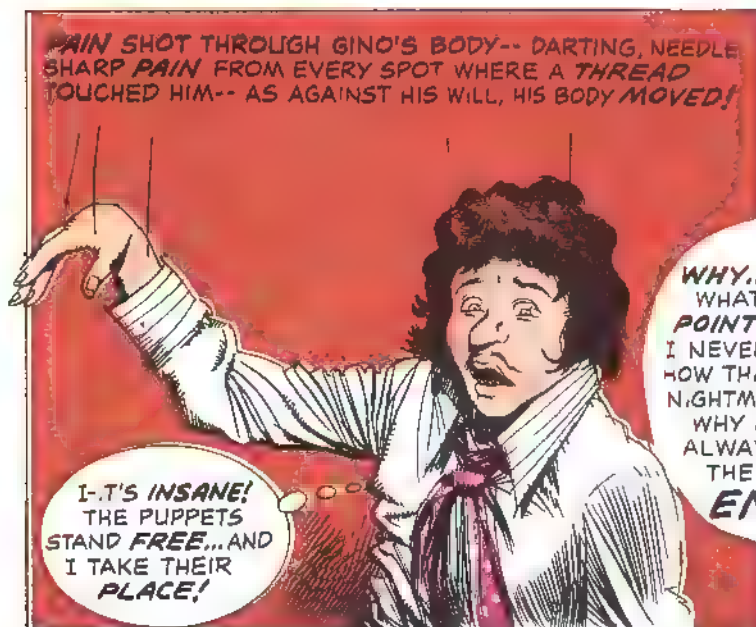
--ONLY A **DREAM** IF THAT GIVES YOU **COMFORT**, GINO... THEN BELIEVE AS YOU **WILL**!

BUT DO NOT THINK THAT WILL PERMIT YOU TO GET **AWAY** WITH ANYTHING! YOU ARE HERE TO **REHEARSE**!

QUITE **RIGHT**... AND IT'S TIME TO PUT HIM THROUGH HIS **PACES**! COME, G.NO... **MOVE**!



PAIN SHOT THROUGH GINO'S BODY-- DARTING, NEEDLE SHARP **PAIN** FROM EVERY SPOT WHERE A **THREAD** TOUCHED HIM-- AS AGAINST HIS WILL, HIS BODY **Moved**!



I-T'S **INSANE**! THE **PUPPETS** STAND **FREE**...AND I TAKE THEIR **PLACE**!

BUT **WHY... WHY?!** WHAT IS THE **POINT**? WHY CAN I NEVER REMEMBER HOW THIS DAMNABLE NIGHTMARE **GOES**...? WHY MUST I ALWAYS FORGET THE WAY IT **ENDS?!**



AGONY DROVE ALL THOUGHT FROM GINO'S MIND AS HE WAS PROPELLED FORWARD BY THE LAUGHING HORDE...

MERCY, YOU GROTESQUE LITTLE MONSTERS... YOU WILL TEAR ME APART! THIS CAN NOT LAST FOR ALWAYS... I WILL AWAKE! THEN, IT WILL BE MY TURN TO JERK THE STRINGS!

FOR NOW IT IS OUR TURN, GINO!

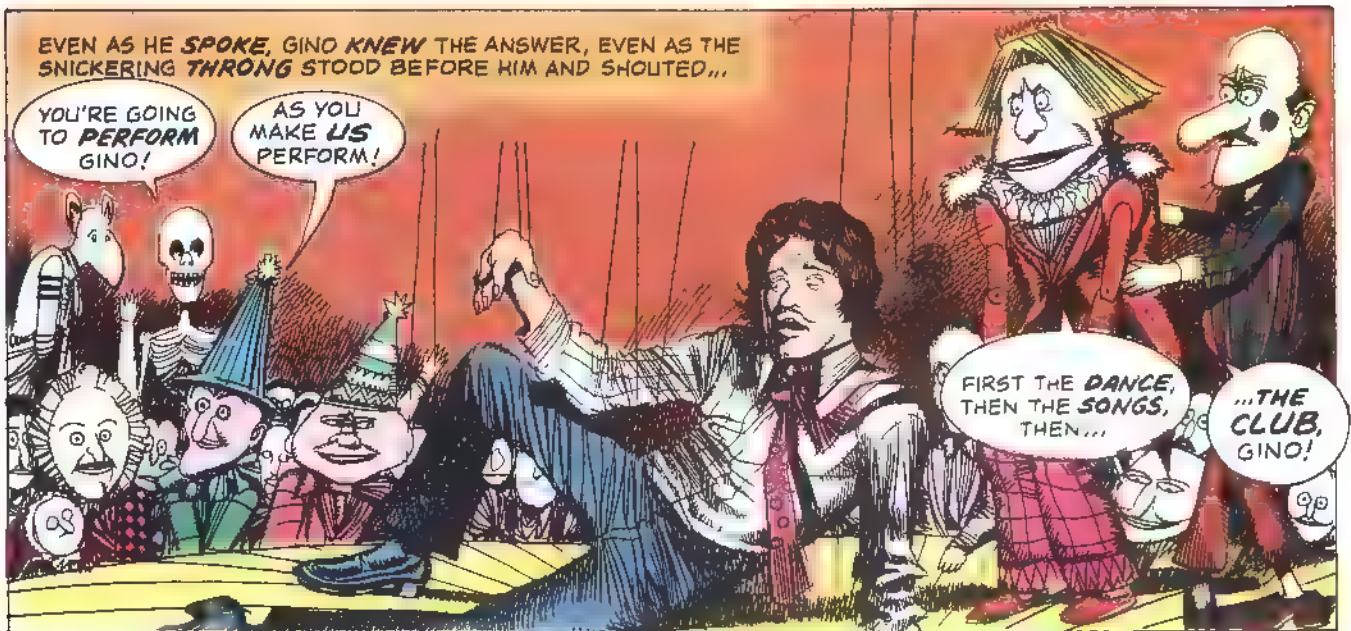
AND YOU DELAY THE PERFORMANCE! MARCH, LITTLE PUPPET... ON TO THE THEATER!

GINO SCREAMED AS HE WAS FORCED TO PRANCE AHEAD OF THE GIGGLING, CHITTERING MOB, UNTIL A SUDDEN, VIOLENT NEAVE...

...LIFTED HIM ONTO THE STAGE!

AGHHH!

P-PLEASE... WHAT DO YOU EXPECT ME TO DO...? I DIDN'T MEAN WHAT I SAID BEFORE... I... I...



EVEN AS HE *SPOKE*, GINO *KNEW* THE ANSWER, EVEN AS THE SNICKERING *THROW* STOOD BEFORE HIM AND SHOUTED...

YOU'RE GOING TO **PERFORM** GINO!

AS YOU MAKE *US* **PERFORM!**

FIRST THE *DANCE*, THEN THE *SONGS*, THEN...

...THE *CLUB*, GINO!

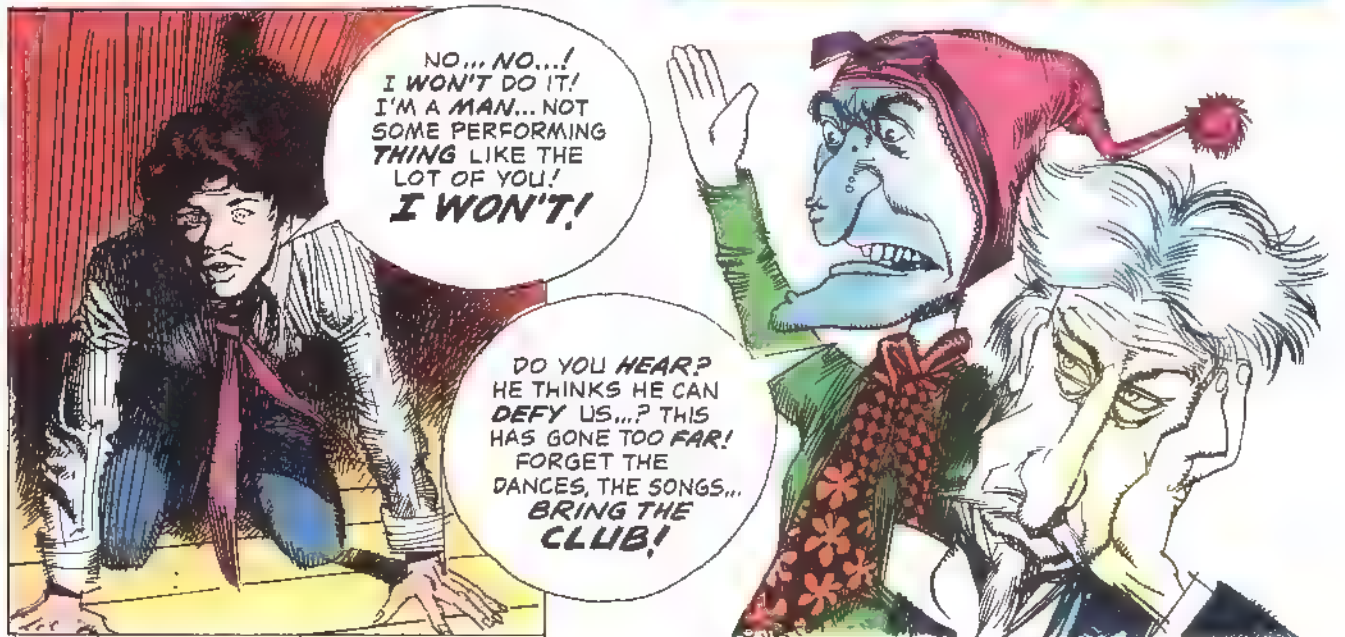
BOOS AND HISSES ROSE FROM THE AUDIENCE, CUTTING OFF HIS *WORDS*! THEIR MOCKING TONES STARTED TO BECOME *RAGE*...

THE... C-CLUB...?

THINK WE DON'T HATE WHAT *WE* DO, GINO?

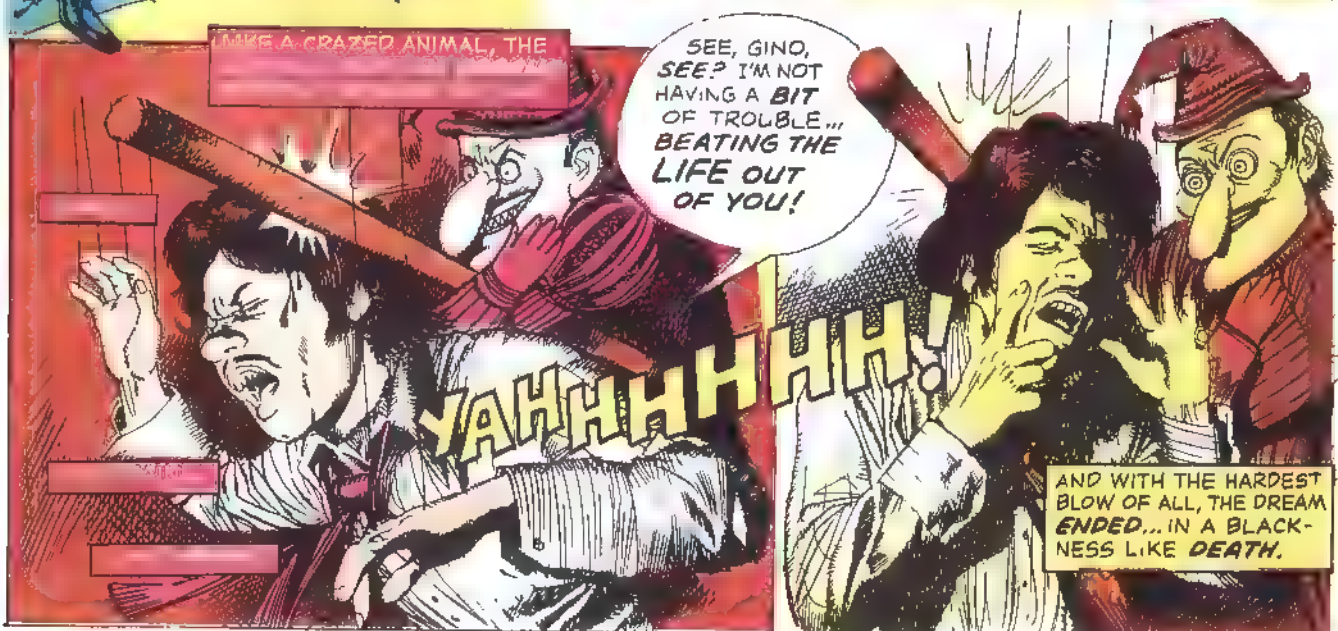
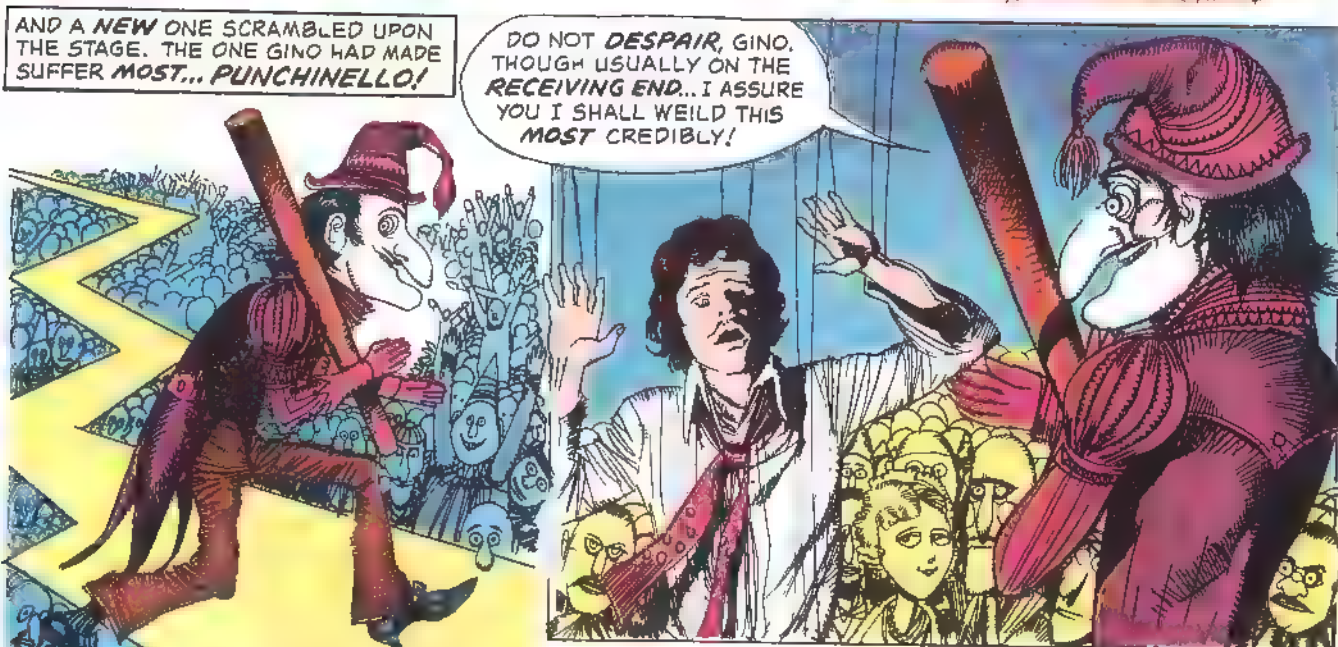
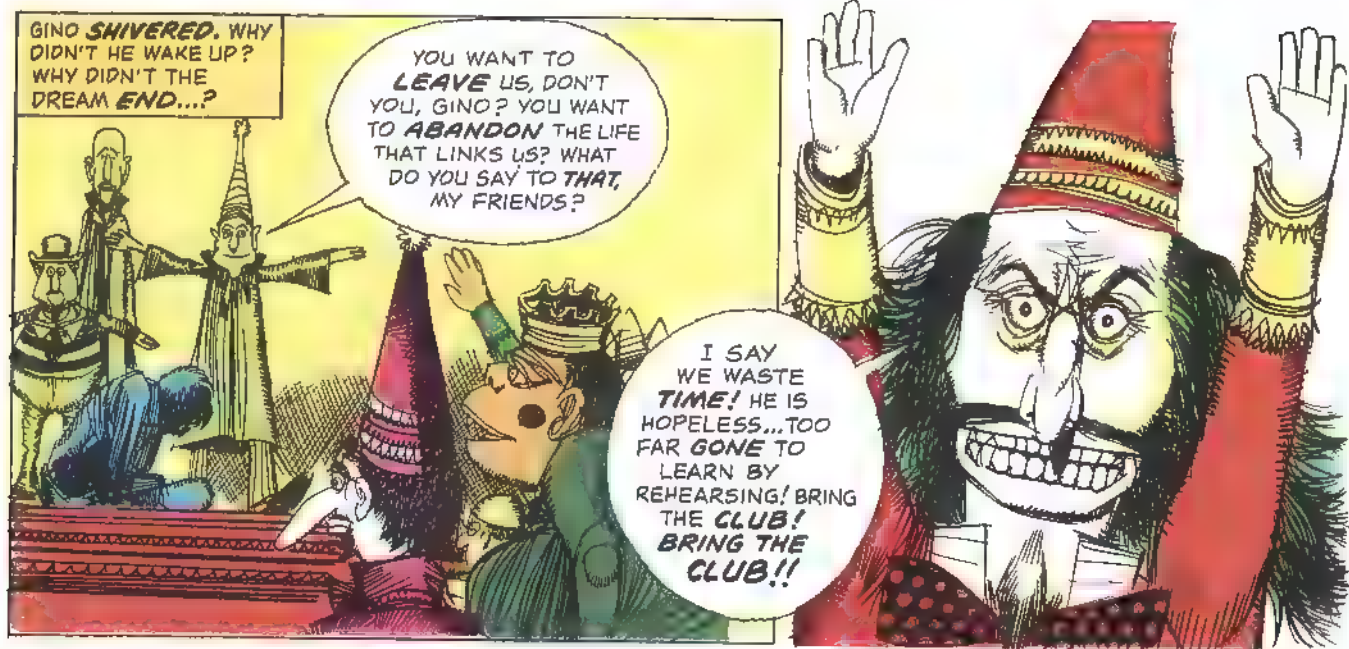
PLEASE... NO...! IT'S ONLY THAT I'VE COME TO *HATE* WHAT I DO SO *MUCH* THAT MAKES ME--

PERFORM!



NO... NO...! I WON'T DO IT! I'M A *MAN*... NOT SOME *PERFORMING THING* LIKE THE LOT OF YOU! **I WON'T!**

DO YOU *HEAR*? HE THINKS HE CAN *DEFY* US...? THIS HAS GONE TOO FAR! FORGET THE DANCES, THE SONGS... **BRING THE CLUB!**



SOME TIME LATER, IT WAS MOST **QUIET** IN THE PUPPET-PLAYER'S WAGON. GINO MALASPINA LAY SPRAWLED AWKWARDLY ON HIS BED, **BLOOD** FROM HIS BATTERED HEAD DRYING, TURNING THICK AND DARK...

THEY WOULD HAVE TO START **CLEANING** HIM SOON, PUNCHINELLO THOUGHT, BUT WITH SOME MAKE-UP OVER THE WOUNDS, THE BODY WOULD CERTAINLY BE FIT TO **USE** YET ANOTHER TIME, ONCE THEY CAST THE **SPELL** BRINGING IT TO **LIFE** AGAIN.

IT WAS A **SHAME** THAT THE SPELLS **FADED** QUICKER EACH TIME, ALLOWING THE HUMAN TO GRADUALLY BECOME **AWARE**... STILL, THIS WAS EASIER THAN CONSTANTLY BREAKING IN A **NEW ONE** TO PLAY PUPPET-MASTER.



AH, WELL! PERHAPS SOON WE **GNOMES** WILL HAVE ATTAINED SUFFICIENT NUMBERS TO AGAIN ASSUME **DOMINATION** IN THIS WORLD... AND THESE SILLY **CHARADES** WILL NOT BE **NECESSARY!**

MEANTIME, GINO, I HOPE YOU DO NOT SO **SWIFTLY** FORGET OUR LITTLE PLAY'S **MORAL**... THAT IT IS **WE** WHO TRULY "HOLD THE CLUB!"

SCREAMING YOUR HEAD OFF BECAUSE YOU'RE MISSING...

VAMPIRELLA

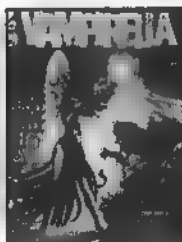
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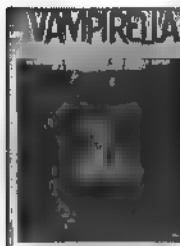
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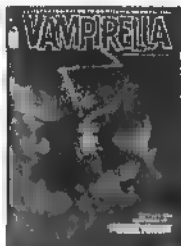
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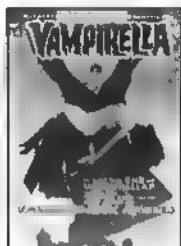
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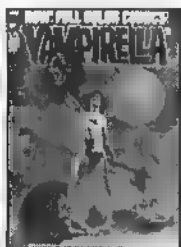
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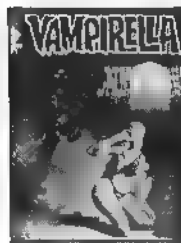
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Tarzan strikes, by Hogarth. Glani 6" x 3" rendering. Order #2662/\$1.25

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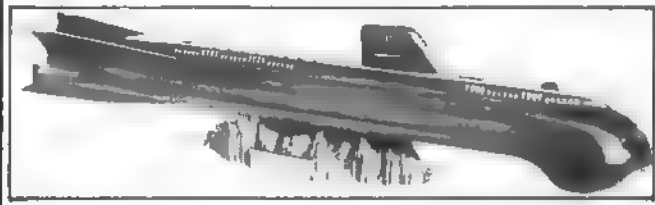
DRACULA
The sun has set, and the night casts its shadows over the land. Time it is for the vicious vampire known as Count Dracula to rise from the grave. Carefully... silently... he goes about his gruesome work, searching for victims from whom to drink fresh blood. A fantastic figurine, cast in the likeness of Bela Lugosi. #2495/\$2.79

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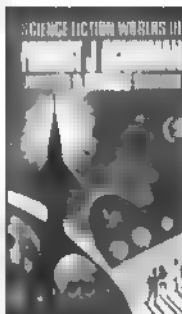
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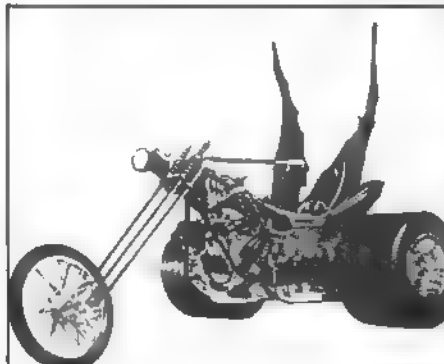
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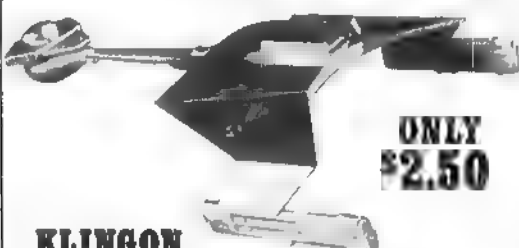
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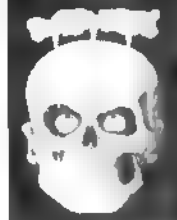


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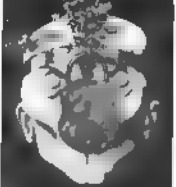
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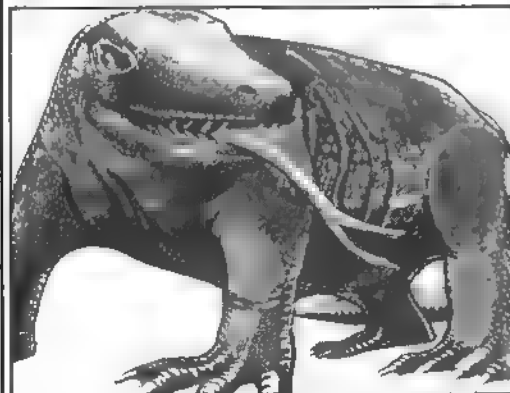
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Follow-up feature to "Doom of Dracula." Karloff stars as scientist disguised as Cerny owner, who is journeying the world-over in search of the Frankenstein monster. And, finally, he finds it, returning it to life. But then, trouble! For the Wolfman arrives on the scene, to destroy the doctor and his new patient. #2247/\$7.99

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One of Karloff's most memorable performances, one of the great horror films. Excavation in Egypt uncovers tomb of Mummy. Im-ho-top. That night, he comes back to life. After murdering one of the scientists, the bandaged beast makes for London. There, he seeks the reincarnation of his one-time Egyptian mistress. Film is Im-ho-TOPSI! #2224/\$7.99

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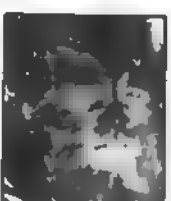
Here is an exciting sequel to "The Mummy." Lon Chaney portrays the man of rotted cloth, as he terrorizes a scientific gathering about his sacred sarcophagus. And, as fate would have it, he falls for the young lady scientist who is a part of this expedition. This Mummy is more brutal, more deadly than the Karloff one. #2269/\$7.99

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This is the big one! Vampire vs. werewolf in horrific shocker. Bela Lugosi portrays the blood-gulper, who subjugates a ferocious werewolf. And, then, together, the two go in search of unsuspecting victims. Lugosi is at his menacing best in this, one of his four vampire roles. The ending is a gripping one, that must be seen. #2267/\$7.99

RETURN OF DRACULA



Dracula is back, in the form of actor Charles Lederer. The Count moves into a small, isolated town and begins to live as a parasite, sucking the blood of the plain country folk around him. All goes well until the infamous monster is found out and hunted. One of the most unusual Dracula films ever produced. A must. #2273/\$7.99

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A team-up of two great horror actors. Lionel Atwill portrays a mad scientist, and Lon Chaney, a truck driver killed in an accident. Atwill discovers the body and through the use of high-voltage electricity, brings Chaney back to life. But the truck driver is no longer human. He's become an electric monster! #2264/\$7.99

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A classic of filmmaking. The second filming of Hugo's immortal novel stars Charles Laughton as the horribly misshapen hunchback called Quasimodo. This brilliant film tells of the beast's love for a beauty, The gypsy Esmeralda. And the horrors that befall the young girl in the France of yore. A sensitive monster movie. #2238/\$7.99

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Many fans of horror films consider Christopher Lee the finest screen Dracula. And in this film, his awesome talent is in evidence. Tall, violent, and menacing, Lee is the immortal count. Here, he travels from Transylvania to London. His plan is to ravage four respectable families in the great city. And this he does, brutally! #2265/\$7.99

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Joan Crawford, star of "Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?" joined with "Rosemary's Baby" Bill Castle to create this modern-day horror classic. This film is not for the faint-hearted, as it is about a series of brutal axe-murders. Is Crawford victim or killer? Warning: vicious axe-killings appear in this film. A real shocker! #2266/\$7.99

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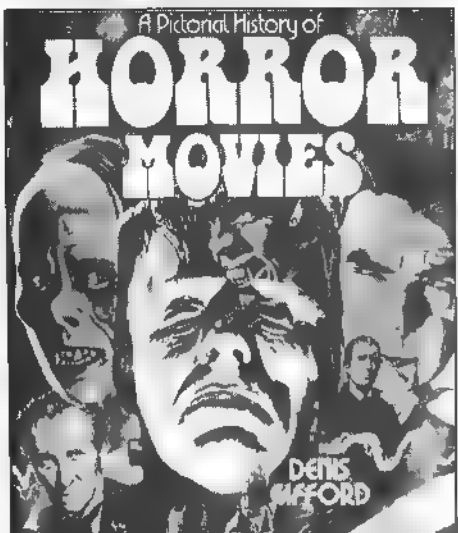


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DRACULA



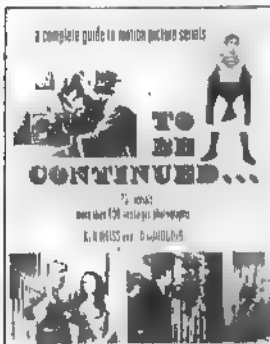
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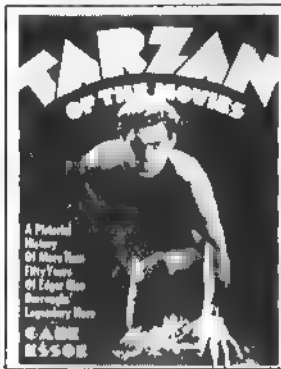
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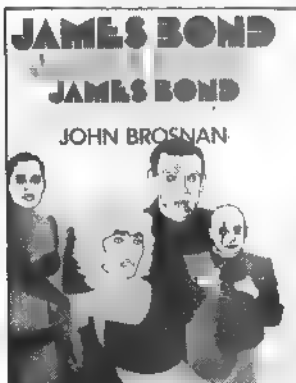
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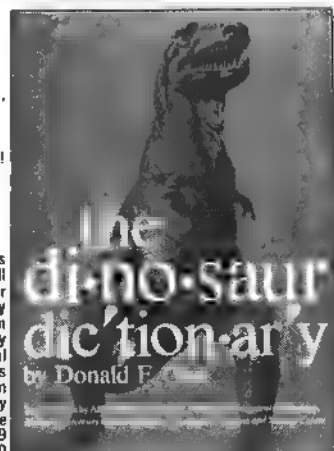
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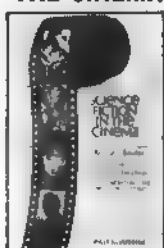
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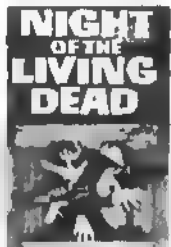
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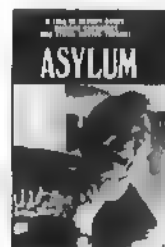
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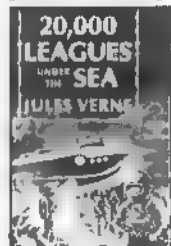
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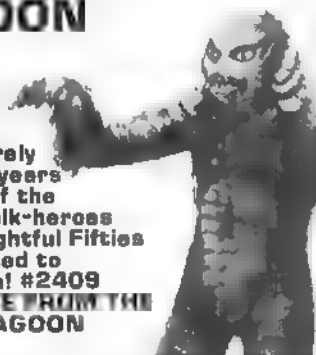
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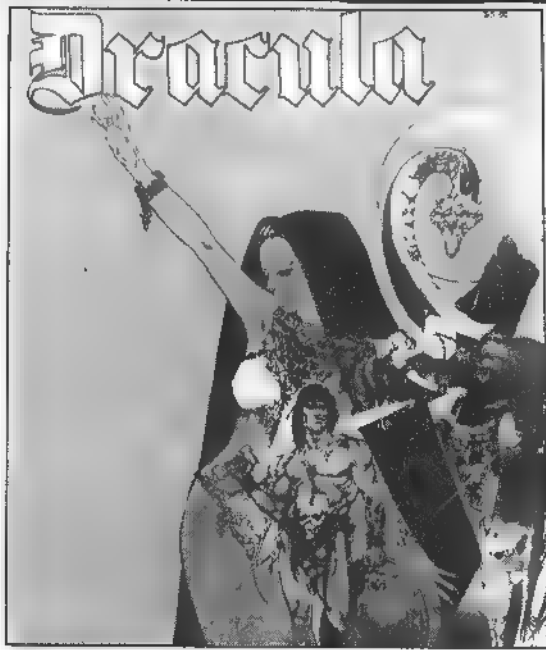
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WEIRD SCIENCE #15 Wally Wood leads off with his sci-fi tale "Martians" followed by Jack Kamen's "Miscalculation", Orlando's "Bum Steer", and Al Williamson's "Captivity". Also, a biography of artist Orlando. #21038 \$1.00



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THE VAULT OF HORROR #26 "Two of a Kind" by Johnny Craig, "Half-Way Horrible" by Jack Kamen, Graham Ingels' "Hook, Line, and Sink", and a special cover story by Jack Davis entitled "Graft in Concrete." Great! #21120 \$1.00



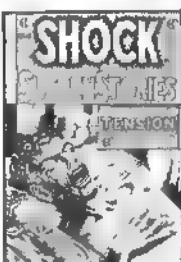
SHOCK SUSPENSE #6 "Dead Right" by Kamen, Orlando's "Not So Tough", "Sugar and Spice" by Ghastly, and one of the most important comic stories ever, Wood's "Under Cover" A Shock! #21122/\$1.00



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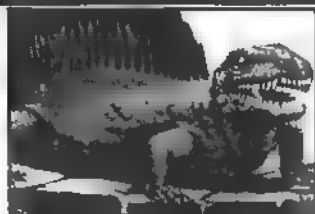
SHOCK SUSPENSE #12 Starring "The Kidnapper" by Reed Crandall, and featuring "The Monkey" by Joe Orlando, "Fall Guy" by Wally Wood (with a climax you won't forget) and "Deadline" by Jack Kamen. #21075 \$1.00



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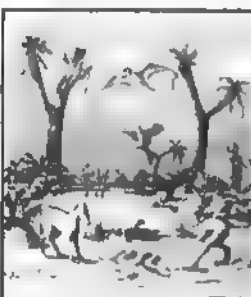


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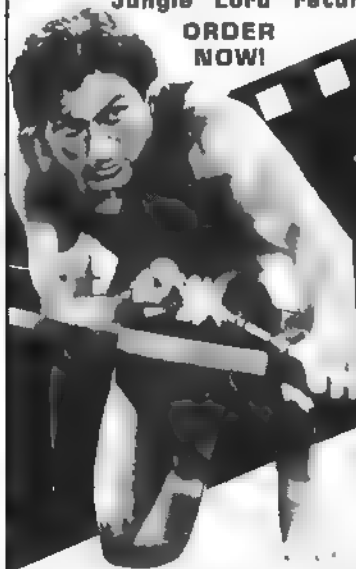
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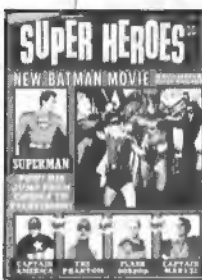
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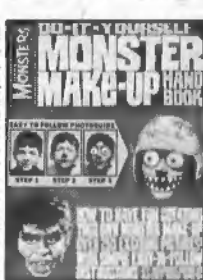
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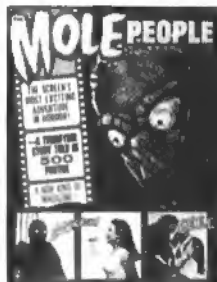
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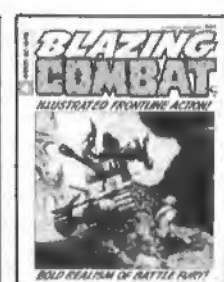
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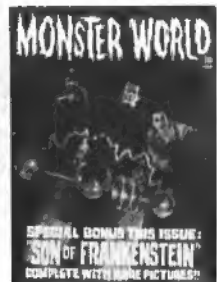
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[illegible]

**WE PAY POSTAGE AND HANDLING CHARGES ON ANY BACK-
ISSUE WARREN MAGAZINES ORDERED WITHIN THE U.S.A.**

TOTAL FOR MERCHANDISE

Up to \$1.50 add.....	49¢	\$5.01 to \$7.00 add.....	99¢
\$1.51 to \$3.00 add.....	69¢	\$7.01 to \$10.00 add.....	\$1.29
\$3.01 to \$5.00 add.....	89¢	Over \$10.00 add.....	\$1.49

POSTAGE & HANDLING

**TOTAL
ENCLOSED**

☐ GRAY
☐ NAVY

VAMPIRELLA
WILL HAUNT
YOUR DREAMS
AGAIN!

IN THE DARKENED
STILLNESS OF THE MIDNIGHT
HOURS WHEN THE FULL MOON
CASTS BLACK, TWISTED SHADOWS
OVER THE COUNTRYSIDE, AND
ONLY CRICKETS AND CHURCH
BELLS ARE HEARD IN THE
DISTANCE... **VAMPIRELLA**
WILL **RETURN!**

AND WITH ME WILL BE
MORE TALES OF THE MACABRE...
MORE TALES TO MAKE YOU
THINK TWICE ABOUT ENTERING
A DARK ROOM... **ALONE!**

NEXT ISSUE: A
SPECIAL COLLECTION OF
THE FINEST STORIES EVER
TO APPEAR IN THESE PAGES...!
BUT TILL THEN, LISTEN
CLOSELY TO THOSE SOUNDS
IN THE NIGHT. ONE OF
THEM MIGHT BE
ALIVE...!



STAY OUT OF THIS MAGAZINE

FOR WORDS ALONE CAN BARELY HINT
AT THE TERROR THAT LURKS WITHIN!

FEAR
OF THE
UNKNOWN...
FEAR
OF THE
UNHOLY...

FEAR
OF THE
SUPERNATURAL...

THE ENTICING
WORLD
OF FORBIDDEN
MYSTERY
AND
NIGHT-MARISH
DELIGHTS!



FOR THIS
IS THE
DREAD
WORLD
OF
VAMPIRELLA!

AND THIS
IS HER
FIFTH
ANNIVERSARY
ISSUE!

A VERY, VERY
SPECIAL
ISSUE
JUST FOR
YOU!